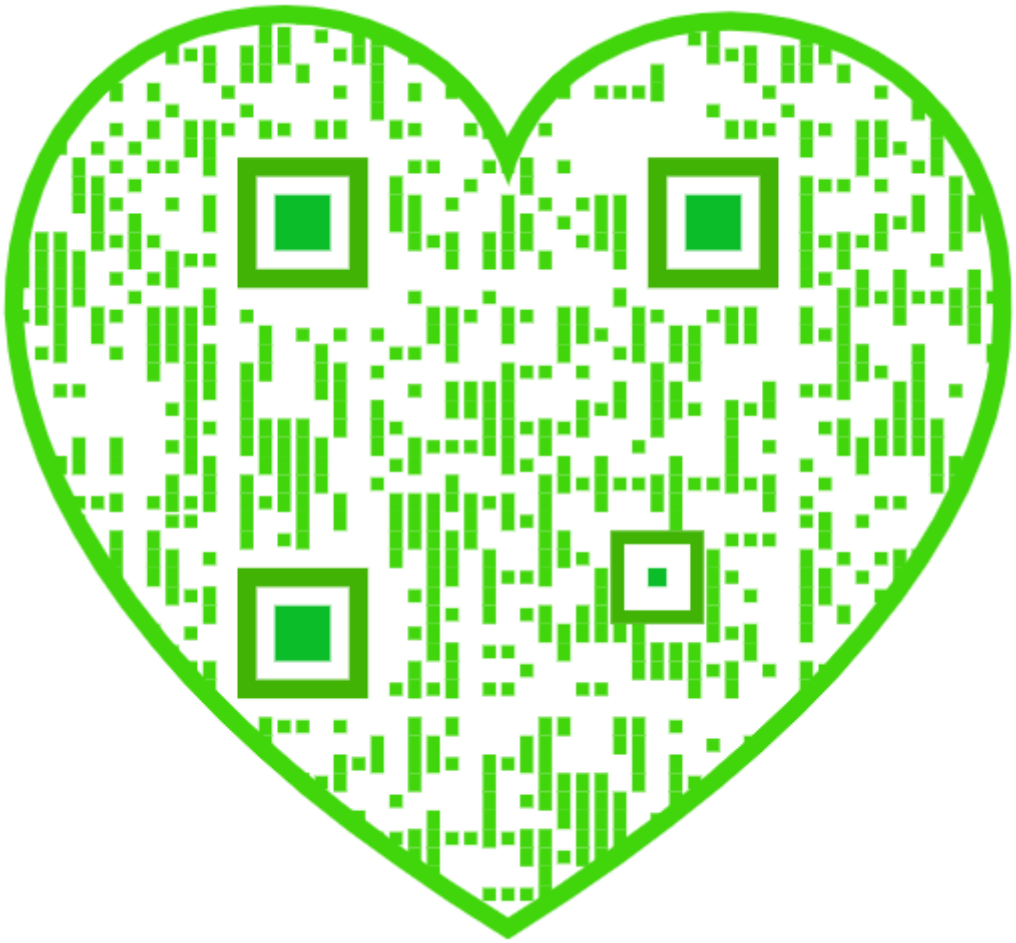

THE

DIGNITY

OF

HUMAN NATURE.

OR,

A brief Account of the certain and eſtabliſhed Means for attaining the true End of our Exiſtence.

IN FOUR BOOKS.

I. Of PRUDENCE.
II. Of KNOWLEDGE.
III. Of VIRTUE.
IV. Of REVEALED RELIGION.

A NEW EDITION.

By *J. B.* MASTER of an ACADEMY at *Newington-Green, Middleſex.*

Qui ſe ipſe norit, intelliget ſe habere aliquid Divinum, ſemperque et ſentiet et faciet aliquid tanto munere dignum. CIC.

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THE DIGNITY OF HUMAN NATURE.

BOOK III.

Of VIRTUE.

INTRODUCTION.

AS the human ſpecies are to exiſt in two different ſtates, an embodied, and a ſpiritual; a mortal life on earth, and an immortal hereafter; it was to be expected, that there ſhould be certain peculiar requiſites for the dignity of each of the two different ſtates reſpectively; and that, at the ſame time, there ſhould be ſuch an analogy between that part of the human exiſtence, which was to be before death, and that which was to be after it, as ſhould be ſuitable to different parts of the ſame ſcheme; ſo that the latter ſhould appear to be the ſequel of the former, making in the whole the complete exiſtence of the creature, beginning with the en-

trance into this mortal life; but knowing no end.

In the two parts of the dignity of human nature, which we have already conſidered, to wit, Prudence and Knowledge, it is evident, that the immediate view is to the improvement and embelliſhment of life, and for diffuſing happineſs through ſociety; at the ſame time that many, if not the greateſt part, of the directions given for the conduct of life, and of the underſtanding, are likewiſe uſeful with a view to the future and immortal ſtate. And indeed there is nothing truly worthy of our attention, which does not ſome way ſtand connected with futurity.

The two parts of the ſubject, which ſtill remain, I mean, of Morals, and Revealed religion, do moſt immediately and directly tend to prepare us for a future ſtate; but, at the ſame time, are highly neceſſary to be ſtudied and attended to, if we mean to eſtabliſh the happineſs even of this preſent mortal life upon a ſure and ſolid foundation. But every one of the four, and every conſiderable particular in each of them, is abſolutely neceſſary for raiſing our nature to that perfection and happineſs, for which it is intended.

The dignity of human nature will in the two following books appear more illuſtrious than the preceding part of this work repreſents it. So that the ſubject riſes in its importance, and demands a higher regard. Might the abilities of the

the writer improve accordingly. Might the infinite Author of the univerſal oeconomy illuminate his mind, and ſecond his weak attempt to exhibit in one view the whole of what mankind have to do, in order to their anſwering the ends which the Divine wiſdom and goodneſs had in view in placing them in a ſtate of diſcipline and improvement for endleſs perfection and happineſs.

To proceed upon a ſolid and ample foundation, in the following deduction of morals, it ſeems proper to take an extenſive proſpect of things, and begin as high as poſſible.

Firſt, it may be worth while briefly, and in a way as little abſtract or logical as poſſible, to obviate a few artificial difficulties, that have been ſtarted by ſome of thoſe deep and ſubtle men, who have a better talent at puzzling than enlightning mankind. One of thoſe imaginary difficulties is, The poſſibility of our reaſon's deceiving us. "Our reaſon," ſay thoſe profound gentlemen, "tells us, that twice two are four, "But what if our reaſon impoſes upon us in "this matter? How, if in the world of the moon, "two multiplied by two ſhould be found to make "five? Who can affirm that this is not the caſe? "Nothing indeed ſeems to us more unqueſtionable "than the proportions among numbers, and "geometrical figures. So that we cannot (ſuch "is the make of our minds) ſo much as conceive the poſſibility that twice two ſhould, in

"any other world, or ſtate of things, make "more or leſs than four, or that all the angles "of a plain triangle ſhould be either more or "leſs than exactly equal to two right ones. But "it does not follow, that other beings may "not underſtand things in a quite different man-"ner, from what we do."

It is wonderful how any man ſhould have hit upon ſuch an unnatural thought as this; ſince the very difficulty is founded upon a flat contradiction and impoſſibility. To ſay, I am convinced that twice two are four, and at the ſame time to talk of doubting whether my faculties do not deceive me, is ſaying, that I believe twice two be four, and at the ſame time I doubt it; or, rather that I ſee it to be ſo, and yet I do not ſee it to be ſo. A ſelf-evident truth is not collected, or deduced, but intuitively perceived, or ſeen by the mind. And other worlds, and other ſtates of things, are wholly out of the queſtion. The ideas in my mind are the objects of the perception of my mind, as much as outward objects, of my eyes. The idea of two of the lunar inhabitants, is as diſtinct an object in my mind, ſo far as concerns the number, as that of two ſhillings in my hand. And I ſee as clearly, that twice two lunar inhabitants will make four lunarians, as that twice two ſhillings will make four ſhillings. And while I ſee this to be ſo, I ſee it to be ſo, and cannot ſuſpect it poſſible to be otherwiſe. I may doubt the perceptions of another perſon, if

I cannot

I cannot myſelf perceive the ſame object: But I cannot doubt what I myſelf perceive, or believe that to be poſſible, which I ſee to be impoſſible.

It is therefore evident, that to queſtion the information of our faculties, or the concluſions of our reaſon, without ſome ground from our faculties themſelves, is a direct impoſſibility. So that thoſe very philoſophers, who pretend to queſtion the informations of their faculties, neither do, nor can really queſtion them, ſo long as they appear unqueſtionable.

To be ſuſpicious of one's own judgment in all caſes, where it is poſſible to err, and to be cautious of proceeding to too raſh concluſions, is the very character of wiſdom. But to doubt, or rather pretend to doubt, where reaſon ſees no ground for doubt, even where the mind diſtinctly perceives truth, is endeavouring at a pitch of folly, of which human nature is not capable.

If the mind is any thing, if there are any reaſoning faculties; what is the object of thoſe reaſoning faculties? Not falſhood. For falſhood is a negative, a mere nothing, and is not capable of being perceived, or of being an object of the mind. If therefore there is a rational mind in the univerſe, the object of that mind is truth. If there is no truth, there is no perception. Whatever the mind perceives, ſo far as the perception is real, is truth. When the reaſoning faculty is deceived, it is not by diſtinctly ſeeing ſomething

that is not; for that is impoſſible; but either by not perceiving ſomething, which, if perceived, would alter the ſtate of the caſe upon the whole; or by ſeeing an object of the underſtanding thro' a falſe medium. But theſe, or any other cauſes of error, do by no means affect the perception of a ſimple idea; nor the perception of a ſimple relation between two ſimple ideas; nor a ſimple inference from ſuch ſimple relation. No mind whatever can diſtinctly and intuitively perceive, or ſee, twice two to be five. Becauſe, that twice two ſhould be five, is an impoſſibility and ſelf-contradiction in terms, as much as ſaying that four is five, or that a thing is what it is not. Nor can any mind diſtinctly perceive, that if two be to four as four is to eight, therefore thrice two is four; for that would be diſtinctly perceiving an impoſſibility. Now an impoſſibility is what has no exiſtence, nor can exiſt. And can any mind perceive, clearly perceive, what does not exiſt?

To perceive nothing, or not to perceive, is the ſame. So that it is evident, ſo much of any thing as can really be perceived, muſt be real and true. There is therefore either no object of mind; no rational faculties in the univerſe; or there is a real truth in things, which the mind perceives, and which is the only object it can perceive, in the ſame manner, as it is impoſſible for the eye to ſee abſolute nothing, or to ſee, and not ſee, at the ſame time.

The

The only point therefore to be attended to, is to endeavour at clear perceptions of things, with all their circumſtances, connexions, and dependencies; which requires more and more accuracy and attention, according as the concluſion to be drawn ariſes out of more or leſs complex premiſes; and it is eaſy to imagine a mind capable of taking in a much greater number and variety of particulars, than can be comprehended by any human being, and of ſeeing clearly through all their mutual relations, however minute, extenſive, or complicated. To ſuch a mind all kinds of difficulties in all parts of knowledge might be as eaſy to inveſtigate, as to us a common queſtion in arithmetic, and with equal certainty. For truths of all kinds are alike certain and alike clear to minds, whoſe capacities and ſtates qualify them for inveſtigating them. And what is before ſaid with regard to our ſafety in truſting our faculties in mathematical or arithmetical points, is equally juſt with reſpect to moral and all other ſubjects.' Whatever is a real, clear, and diſtinct object of perception, muſt be ſome real exiſtence. For an abſolute nothing can never be an object of diſtinct perception. Now the differences, agreements, contraſts, analogies, and all other relations obtaining among moral ideas, are as eſſentially real, and as proper ſubjects of reaſoning, as thoſe in numbers and mathematics. I can no more be deceived, nor bring myſelf to doubt a clear moral propoſition, or axiom, than

a mathematical one. I can no more doubt whether happineſs is not preferable to miſery, than whether the whole is not greater than any of its parts. I can no more doubt, whether a being, who enjoys ſix degrees of happineſs, and at the ſame time labours under one degree of miſery, is not in a better ſituation than another, who enjoys but three degrees of happineſs, and is expoſed to one of miſery, ſuppoſing thoſe degrees equal in both, than I can doubt whether a man, who is poſſeſſed of ſix thouſand pounds and owes one, or another, who is worth only three thouſand pounds and owes one, is the richer. And ſo of all other caſes, where our views and perceptions are clear and diſtinct. For a truth of one ſort is as much a truth, as of another, and, when fully perceived, is as incapable of being doubted of or miſtaken.

Yet ſome have argued, that though, as to numbers and mathematics, there is a real independent truth in the nature of things, which could not poſſibly have been otherwiſe, it is quite different in morals. Though it was impoſſible in the nature of things, that twice two ſhould be five, it might have been ſo contrived, that, univerſally, what is now virtue ſhould have been vice, and what is now vice ſhould have been virtue. That all our natural notions of right and wrong are wholly arbitrary and factitious; a mere inſtinct or taſte; very ſuitable indeed to the preſent ſtate

of

of things: but by no means founded *in rerum naturâ*, and only the pure effect of a poſitive ordination of Divine wiſdom, to anſwer certain ends.

It does not ſuit the deſign of this work to enter into any long diſcuſſion of knotty points. But I would aſk thoſe gentlemen, who maintain the above doctrine, Whether the Divine ſcheme in creating a univerſe, and communicating happineſs to innumerable beings, which before had no exiſtence, was not good, or preferable to the contrary? If they ſay, there was no good in creating and communicating happineſs, they muſt ſhew the wiſdom of the infinitely-wiſe Creator in chooſing rather to create than not. They muſt ſhew how (to ſpeak with reverence) he came to chooſe to create a world. For ſince all things appear to him exactly as they are, if it was not in itſelf wiſer and better to create than not, it muſt have appeared ſo to him, and if it had appeared ſo to him, it is certain he never had produced a world.

To this ſome anſwer, that his creating a world was not the conſequence of his ſeeing it to be in itſelf better to create than not; but he was moved to it by the benevolence of his own nature, which attribute of goodneſs or benevolence is, as well as benevolence in a good man, according to their notion of it, no more than a taſte or inclination, which happens, they know not how, to be in the Divine nature; but is in itſelf indifferent, and abſtracting from its conſequences, neither amiable

ble nor odious, good nor bad. To this the reply is eaſy, to wit, That there is not, nor can be, any attribute in the Divine nature, that could poſſibly have been wanting; or the want of which would not have been an imperfection: for whatever is in his nature, is neceſſary, elſe it could not be in his nature; neceſſity being the only account to be given for his exiſtence and attributes. Now what is in its own nature indifferent, cannot be ſaid to exiſt neceſſarily; therefore could not exiſt in God. To queſtion whether goodneſs or benevolence in the Divine nature is neceſſary or accidental, is the ſame, as queſtioning whether the very exiſtence of the Deity is neceſſary or accidental. For whatever is in God, is God. And to queſtion whether the Divine attribute of goodneſs is a real perfection, or a thing indifferent, that is, to doubt, whether the Divine nature might not have been as perfect without, as with it; comes to the ſame as queſtioning, whether exiſtence is a thing indifferent to the Deity, or not. His whole nature is excellent; is the abſtract of excellence; and nothing belonging to him is indifferent. Of which more hereafter.

It is therefore evident, that the benevolence of the Divine nature is in itſelf a real excellence or perfection, independent of our ideas of it, and cannot, without the higheſt abſurdity, not to ſay impiety, be conceived of, as indifferent. It is alſo evident, that it muſt have been upon the whole better that the univerſe ſhould be created, and a number

number of creatures produced (in order to be partakers of various degrees and kinds of happineſs) than not; elſe God, who ſees all things as they are, could not have ſeen any reaſon for creating, and therefore would not have created them.

Let it then be ſuppoſed, that ſome being ſhould, through thoughtleſſneſs and voluntary blindneſs at firſt, and afterwards through pride and rebellion, at length work up his malice to that degree, as to wiſh to deſtroy the whole creation, or to ſubject millions of innocent beings to unſpeakable miſery; would this likewiſe be good? Was it better to create than not? and is it likewiſe better to deſtroy than preſerve? Was it good to give being and happineſs to innumerable creatures? and would it likewiſe be good to plunge innumerable innocent creatures into irrecoverable ruin and miſery? If theſe ſeeming oppoſites be not entirely the ſame, then there is in morals a real difference, an eternal and unchangeable truth, proportion, agreement, and diſagreement, in the nature of things (of which the Divine nature is the baſis) independent on poſitive will, and which could not have been otherwiſe; being no more arbitrary or factitious, than what is found in numbers, or mathematics. So that a wickedly-diſpoſed being would, ſo long as he continued unreformed, have been as really ſo in any other ſtate of things, and in any other world, as in this in which we live; and a good being would have been

been equally amiable and valuable ten thouſand years ago, and in the planet *Jupiter*, as upon earth, and in our times; and the difference between the degrees of goodneſs and malignity are as determinate, and as diſtinctly perceived by ſuperior beings, as between a hundred, a thouſand, and a million; or between a line, a ſurface, and a cube.

Nothing is more evident, than that we can enter a very great way into the Divine ſcheme in the natural world, and ſee very clearly the wiſdom and contrivance, which ſhine conſpicuous in every part of it. I believe nobody ever took it into his head to doubt, whether the inhabitants of any other world would not judge the ſun to be proper for giving light, the eye for ſeeing, the ear for hearing, and ſo forth. No one ever doubted whether the angel *Gabriel* conceived of the wiſdom of God in the natural world, in any manner contrary to what we do. Why then ſhould people fill their heads with fancies, about our perceptions of moral truth, any more than of natural. There is no doubt, but we have all our clear and immediate ideas, by our being capable of ſeeing, or apprehending (within a certain limited ſphere) things as they are really and eſſentially in themſelves. And we may be aſſured, that ſimple truths do by no means appear to our minds in any ſtate eſſentially different from or contrary to that in which they appear to the mind of the angel *Gabriel*.

That there is a poſſibility of attaining certainty, by ſenſation, intuition, deduction, teſtimony, and inſpiration, ſeems eaſy enough to prove. For, firſt, where ſenſation is, all other arguments or proofs are ſuperfluous. What I feel I cannot bring myſelf to doubt, if I would. I muſt either really exiſt or not. But I cannot even be miſtaken in imagining I feel my own exiſtence; for that neceſſarily ſuppoſes my exiſting. I feel my mind eaſy and calm. I cannot, if I would, bring myſelf to doubt, whether my mind is eaſy and calm. Becauſe I feel a perfect internal tranquillity; and there is nothing within or without me to perſuade me to doubt the reality of what I feel; and what I really feel, ſo far as I really feel it, muſt be real; it being abſurd to talk of feeling or perceiving what has no real exiſtence.

Again, there is no natural abſurdity in ſuppoſing it poſſible for a human, or other intelligent mind, to arrive at a clear and diſtinct perception of truth by intuition. On the contrary, the ſuppoſition of the poſſibility of a faculty of intelligence neceſſarily infers the poſſibility of the exiſtence of truth, as the object of intelligence, and of truth's being within the reach of the intelligent faculty. If there is but one being in the univerſe capable of underſtanding truth, there muſt be truth for that being to underſtand; and that truth muſt be within the reach of his underſtanding. But as it is ſelf-evident, that there are an infinite number of ideal, or conceivable truths, it is likewiſe evident, there muſt be an infinitely

comprehenſive

comprehenſive underſtanding, which perceives this infinity of truths. To talk of a truth perceivable by no mind, or that never has been the object of any perceptive faculty, would be a ſelf contradiction. Mind is the very *ſubſtratum* of truth. An infinite mind of infinite truth. That a finite underſtanding may attain a finite perception of truth, is neceſſary to be admitted, unleſs we deny the poſſibility of the exiſtence of any finite underſtanding. For an underſtanding capable of attaining no degree of knowledge of truth, or an underſtanding which neither did nor could underſtand or perceive any one truth, is a contradiction in words. Proceeding in this train of reaſoning, we ſay, Either there is no ſuch thing as intuition poſſible, or it muſt be poſſible by intuition to perceive truth; there is no ſuch thing as ſenſation poſſible, or it muſt be poſſible for the mind to perceive real objects. That what we actually and really apprehend by intuition and ſenſation, muſt be ſomewhat real, as far as actually and really apprehended; it being impoſſible to apprehend that which is not. Now the evidence of the reality of any exiſtence, or the truth of any propoſition, let it be conveyed to the mind by deduction, by teſtimony, by revelation, or if there were a thouſand other methods of information, would ſtill be reducible at laſt to direct intuition; excepting what ariſes from ſenſation. The mind, in judging of any propoſition, thro' whatever channel communicated to it, or on whatever

whatever arguments eſtabliſhed, judges of the ſtrength of the evidence; it makes allowance for the objections; it balances the arguments, or conſiderations of whatever kind, againſt one another; it ſees which preponderates. And ſuppoſing this to be done properly, it ſees the true ſtate of the caſe, and determines accordingly; nor can it poſſibly determine contrary to what it ſees to be the true ſtate of the caſe.

When, for example, I conſider in my own mind, on one hand, the various evidence from authors and remains of antiquity, that there was formerly ſuch a ſtate as the *Roman*, which conquered great part of this ſide of the globe; and on the other, find no reaſon for doubting of the exiſtence of ſuch a ſtate in former times, I find it as reaſonable to believe it, and as impoſſible to doubt it, as to doubt the ſolution of a queſtion in numbers or quantity, which I had proved by arithmetic vulgar and decimal, and by algebra. And ſo of other inſtances. So that, though it would not be proper to ſay, I ſee, by intuition, the truth of this propoſition, "There was once ſuch "a city as *Rome*;" yet I may with the utmoſt propriety ſay, I ſee ſuch a ſuperabundance of evidence for the truth of the propoſition, and at the ſame time ſee no reaſon to think that any valid objections can be brought againſt it, that I intuitively ſee the evidence for it to be ſuch as puts it beyond all poſſibility of being doubted by me, and feel that, though I ſhould labour ever

ſo much to bring myſelf to queſtion it, I abſolutely cannot; nor can I conceive it poſſible that it ſhould appear queſtionable to any perſon, who has fairly conſidered it.

Suppoſe, in the ſame manner, (in a point which has been diſputed) a man, of a clear head, to have thoroughly examined all the various evidences for the Chriſtian religion, allowing to every one its due weight, and no more; ſuppoſe him to have attentively conſidered every objection againſt it, allowing, likewiſe, to every one impartially its full force; ſuppoſe the reſult of the whole enquiry to be his finding ſuch a preponderancy of evidence for the truth of Chriſtianity, as ſhould beyond all compariſon overbalance the whole weight of the objections againſt it; I ſay, that ſuch a perſon would then intuitively ſee the evidence for Chriſtianity to be unſurmountable; and could no more bring himſelf to doubt it, than to doubt whether all the angles of a triangle are equal to two right ones; nor to conceive the poſſibility of any other perſon's doubting it, who had fairly conſidered both ſides of the queſtion.

In the ſame manner a perſon, who ſhould carefully examine the arguments in a ſyſtem of ethics, and ſhould clearly and convincingly perceive the ſtrength of each, the connexion of one with another, and the reſult of the whole; might in the ſtricteſt propriety of ſpeech be ſaid to ſee intuitively

tuitively the truth and juſtneſs of that ſyſtem of ethics.

If ſo, then it is plain, that certainty is, in the nature of things, equally attainable upon all ſubjects, though beings of our limited capacity may not, in our preſent imperfect ſtate, be capable of attaining it. In the ſame manner as the truth of the moſt obvious axiom in arithmetic or geometry may lie out of the reach of an infant, or an idiot; which appears ſelf-evident to the firſt glance of any mind that is capable of putting two thoughts together. How comes it to paſs, that the truth of ſuch an axiom as the following appears immediately inconteſtable: That if from equal quantities equal quantities be ſubtracted, equal quantities will remain? How comes, I ſay, the truth of this axiom to appear at once, while moral doctrines furniſh endleſs diſpute? The obvious anſwer is, from the ſimplicity of the terms of the propoſition, and of what is affirmed of them, which leaves no room for ambiguity or uncertainty; and from the narrowneſs of the ſubject to be conſidered, or the ſmallneſs of the number of ideas to be taken in, which prevents all danger of puzzling, or diſtracting the underſtanding, and rendering the reſult or concluſion doubtful. Suppoſe the arguments for Chriſtianity to be exactly one thouſand, and the objections againſt it exactly one hundred: Suppoſe an angelic, or other ſuperior underſtanding, to perceive intuitively the exact ſtate of

each; and to ſee diſtinctly the hundred objections to be ſurmountable, or not valid, and the arguments to be every one ſolid and concluſive; I ſay, that ſuch a being would intuitively ſee the truth of Chriſtianity in the ſame manner as a human mind ſees the truth of any complex demonſtration in *Euclid*.

It is therefore certain, that all evidence whatever is to be finally tried by, and reduced to intuition, except that which we have from ſenſation: That truth of all kinds is equally capable of being intuitively perceived, and of being aſcertained to minds fitted for receiving and examining it: That moral truth is in no reſpect naturally more vague or precarious than mathematical; but equally fixed, and equally clear, to ſuperior minds; and probably will be ſo hereafter to thoſe of the human make, who ſhall attain to higher improvements in future ſtates: And that in the mean time our duty is to examine carefully, and to act upon the reſult of candid enquiry.

That we are, in ſome inſtances of inconſiderable importance to our final happineſs, liable to error, is no more than a natural conſequence of the imperfection of our preſent ſtate, and the number of particulars neceſſary to be taken in, in order to find out the true ſtate of things upon the whole. But this, ſo far from proving the impoſſibility of coming at truth, or that we are expoſed to irremediable error, ſhews, that truth

is

is certainly to be attained by ſuch intelligent beings as ſhall, with proper advantages of capacity and means, ſet themſelves to the finding it out with ſincerity and diligence.

The amount of what has been ſaid on moral certainty is briefly as follows, *viz.*

That it is ſelf-contradictory to talk of doubting the perceptions of our faculties, it being impoſſible to perceive a truth clearly, and yet to doubt it.

That our ſimple ideas, being the immediate objects of our underſtandings, and being level to direct intuition, are capable of being with the greateſt exactneſs examined and compared, in order to the finding the truth or falſhood of any propoſition, whoſe terms are not too complex, or otherwiſe out of the reach of our faculties. And that whatever the underſtanding clearly determines, after mature examination, to be truth, it is impoſſible to doubt.

That whatever any mind really perceives muſt be real, as far as perceived. That therefore, there muſt be real truth perceivable, elſe there could be no perceptive faculty in the univerſe; ſince falſhoods and impoſſibilities are not in the nature of things perceivable, being non-entities.

That all kinds of truths appear equally certain to minds capable of inveſtigating them. That moral truth is in its own nature no more vague or precarious, than mathematical; though

in ſome inſtances more difficultly inveſtigated by our narrow and defective faculties.

That there muſt be in the nature of things, (the baſis of which is the Divine nature) an eternal, eſſential, and unchangeable difference in morals; that there is a real, not a factitious, or arbitrary, good and evil, a greater and leſs preferableneſs in different characters and actions. That, accordingly, if it had been in the nature of things no way better that an univerſe ſhould be created, than not; it is evident, God, who ſees all things as they are, would not have ſeen any reaſon for creating an univerſe, and therefore would not have exerted his power in the production of it.

That the Divine attribute of benevolence is, in its own nature, really and eſſentially, and without all regard to the notions of created beings, and excluſive of all conſequences, a perfection; not an indifferent property, as ſome pretend. For that nothing either evil or indifferent can be conceived of as exiſting neceſſarily: but the Divine benevolence and all the other attributes of his nature exiſt neceſſarily.

That if it was proper, or good, to create an univerſe of beings capable of happineſs, it muſt on the contrary be improper, or morally wicked, to endeavour to oppoſe the Divine ſcheme of benevolence, or to wiſh innocent beings condemned to miſery. There is therefore an eternal and eſſential, not a factitious, or arbitrary, good and evil

evil in morals; and the foundation of moral good is in the neceſſary and unchangeable attributes of the Divine nature.

That certainty is in the nature of things attainable by ſenſation. That reality muſt be the object of ſenſation, it being impoſſible to feel what has no exiſtence. That it is impoſſible to doubt what we perceive by ſenſation.

That certainty is in the nature of things attainable by intuition. That the exiſtence of intelligence neceſſarily ſuppoſes that of truth, as the object of underſtanding. That truth is a Divine attribute; therefore muſt exiſt neceſſarily. That every intelligent mind muſt be ſuppoſed capable of intuitively perceiving truth. And that we find by experience, we cannot even force ourſelves to doubt the truths we intuitively perceive.

That ſuch certainty is in the nature of things attainable in ſubjects of which we receive information by deduction, teſtimony, and revelation, as renders it impoſſible for the mind to heſitate or doubt. For that the ſum, or reſult, of all kinds of evidence, however complex and various, except what ariſes from ſenſation; is the object of direct intuition.

To conclude this introduction: were our preſent ſtate much more diſadvantageous than it is; did we labour under much greater difficulty and uncertainty, than we do, in our ſearch after truth; prudence would ſtill direct us, upon the whole,

what courſe to take. The probability of ſafety in the main would ſtill be upon the ſide of virtue; and there would ſtill be reaſon to fear that vice and irregularity would end ill. This alone would be enough to keep wiſe and conſiderate beings to their duty, as far as known. But our condition is very different; and our knowledge of all neceſſary truth ſufficiently clear, extenſive and certain.

SECT. I.

The Being and Attributes of God eſtabliſhed as the Foundation of Morality.

NOTHING is more indiſputable than that ſomething now exiſts. Every perſon may ſay to himſelf, "I certainly exiſt: for "I feel that I exiſt. And I could neither feel "that I exiſt, nor be deceived in imagining it, "if I was nothing. If, therefore, I exiſt, the "next queſtion is, How I came to be?" Whatever exiſts, muſt owe its being, and the particular circumſtances of it, to ſome cauſe prior to itſelf, unleſs it exiſts neceſſarily. For a being to exiſt neceſſarily, is to exiſt ſo as that it was impoſſible for that being not to have exiſted, and that the ſuppoſition of its not exiſting ſhould imply a direct contradiction in terms. Let any perſon try to conceive of ſpace and duration as annihilated, or not exiſting, and he will find it impoſſible, and that they will ſtill return upon his mind

mind in ſpite of all his efforts to the contrary. Such an exiſtence therefore is neceſſary, of which there is no other account to be given, than that it is the nature of the thing to exiſt; and this account is fully ſatisfying to the mind.

Whatever difficulty we may find in conceiving of the particular *modus* of a neceſſary exiſtence; an exiſtence, which always was, and could not but be; always continuing, but which never had a beginning; as all the difficulty of ſuch conceptions evidently ariſes from the narrowneſs of our finite and limited minds, and as our reaſon forces us upon granting the reality and neceſſity of them, it would be contradicting the moſt irreſiſtible convictions of our reaſon, to diſpute them; and it is indeed out of our power to diſpute them.

To have recourſe to an infinite ſucceſſion of dependent cauſes, produced by one another from eternity, and to give that as an account of the exiſtence of the world, will give no ſatisfaction to the mind; but will confound it with an infinite abſurdity. For if it be abſurd to attempt to conceive of one ſingle dependent being, produced without a cauſe, or exiſting without being brought into exiſtence by ſome pre-exiſtent cauſe; it is infinitely more ſo, to try to conceive of an infinite ſeries of dependent beings exiſting without being produced by any original and uncreated cauſe; as it would be more ſhocking

ing to talk of a thouſand links of a chain hanging upon nothing, than of one.

That the material world is not the firſt cauſe, is evident, becauſe the firſt cauſe, exiſting neceſſarily, without which neceſſity he could not poſſibly exiſt, as a firſt cauſe, muſt be abſolutely perfect, unchangeable, and every where the ſame, of which afterwards. This, we ſee, is by no means to be affirmed of the material world; its form, motion, and ſubſtance, being endleſsly various, and ſubject to perpetual change. That nothing material could have been the neceſſarily exiſtent firſt cauſe is evident, becauſe we know, that all material ſubſtances conſiſt of a number of unconnected and ſeparable particles; which would give, not one, but a number of firſt cauſes, which is a palpable abſurdity. And that the firſt cauſe cannot be one ſingle indiviſible atom, is plain, becauſe the firſt cauſe, being neceſſarily exiſtent, muſt be equally neceſſary throughout infinite ſpace.

That chance, which is only a word, not a real being, ſhould be the cauſe of the exiſtence of the world, is the ſame as ſaying, that nothing is the cauſe of its exiſtence, or that it neither exiſts neceſſarily, nor was produced by that which exiſts neceſſarily, and therefore does not exiſt at all. Therefore, after ſuppoſing ever ſo long a ſeries of beings producing one another, we muſt at laſt have recourſe to ſome Firſt Cauſe of all, himſelf uncauſed, exiſting neceſſarily, or ſo, as

that

that the ſuppoſition of his not exiſting would imply a contradiction. This firſt cauſe we call God.

The firſt cauſe muſt of neceſſity be one, in the moſt pure, ſimple, and indiviſible manner. For the firſt cauſe muſt exiſt neceſſarily, that is, it is a direct abſurdity to ſay, that ſomething now exiſts, and yet there is no original firſt cauſe of exiſtence. Now, when to avoid this abſurdity, we have admitted one independent, neceſſarily-exiſtent, firſt cauſe, if we afterwards proceed to admit another firſt cauſe, or number of firſt cauſes, we ſhall find, that all but one are ſuperfluous. Becauſe one is ſufficient to account for the exiſtence of all things. And as it will evidently be no contradiction to ſuppoſe any one out of a plurality not to exiſt, ſince one alone is ſufficient; it follows that there can be but one ſingle firſt cauſe.

Beſides, it will be made evident, by and by, that the firſt cauſe muſt be abſolutely perfect, in every poſſible reſpect, and in every poſſible degree. Now that which ingroſſes and ſwallows up into itſelf all poſſible perfection, or rather, is itſelf abſolute perfection, can be but one; becauſe there can be but one abſolute Whole of perfection.

We may poſſibly, through inattention, commit miſtakes with reſpect to what are, or are not, perfections fit to be aſcribed to the firſt cauſe, as ſome of the Heathens were abſurd enough to

aſcribe

aſcribe even to their ſupreme deity attributes which ought rather to be termed vices than virtues. But we can never miſtake in aſcribing to the Supreme Being all poſſible, real, and conſiſtent perfections. For a Being, who exiſts naturally and neceſſarily, muſt of neceſſity exiſt in an infinite and unbounded manner, the ground of his exiſtence being alike in all moments of duration, and all points of ſpace. Whatever exiſts naturally and neceſſarily in the Eaſt, muſt of courſe exiſt naturally and neceſſarily in the Weſt, in the South, and in the North, above and below, in former, preſent, and in future times. Whatever exiſts in this manner, exiſts in a perfect manner. Whatever exiſts in a perfect manner, in reſpect of extent and duration, muſt evidently be perfect in every other reſpect, of which its nature is capable. For the whole idea of ſuch a Being is by the ſuppoſition natural and neceſſary; a partial neceſſity being an evident abſurdity. That the firſt cauſe therefore ſhould be deficient in any one perfection conſiſtent with the nature of ſuch a Being as we muſt conclude the firſt cauſe to be, is as evident a contradiction, as to ſay that the firſt cauſe may naturally and neceſſarily exiſt in the Eaſt, and not in the Weſt, at preſent, but not in time paſt, or to come. For ſuppoſe it were argued, that the firſt cauſe may not be infinite, for example, in wiſdom; I aſk firſt, Whether wiſdom can be ſaid to be a property

property unſuitable to the idea of the firſt cauſe? This will hardly be pretended. No one can imagine it would be a more proper idea of the firſt cauſe, to think of him as of a Being utterly void of intelligence, than as infinite in knowledge. It is evident, that of two beings, otherwiſe alike, but one of which was wholly void of intelligence, and the other poſſeſſed of it, the latter would be more perfect than the former, by the difference of the whole amount of the intelligence he poſſeſſed. On the other hand, of two beings otherwiſe alike, but one of which laboured under a vicious inclination, which occaſioned a deviation from, or deficiency of moral perfection, and the other was wholly clear of ſuch imperfection, the latter would be a more perfect nature than the former, by the difference of the whole amount of ſuch negative quantity, or deficiency. Which ſhews the neceſſity of aſcribing to the Supreme Being every poſſible real perfection, and the abſurdity of ſuppoſing the ſmalleſt imperfection or deficiency to be in his nature.

If it be evident then that wiſdom, in any the loweſt degree, is an attribute fit to be aſcribed to the firſt cauſe, and if whatever is in the firſt cauſe, is in him naturally and neceſſarily, that is, could not but have been in him, it is obvious, that ſuch an attribute cannot be in him in any limited degree, any more than he can naturally

and neceſſarily exiſt in one point of ſpace, and not through all. It is an evident contradiction to ſuppoſe the firſt cauſe exiſting naturally and neceſſarily, and yet limited, either as to his exiſtence or perfections; becauſe it is plain, there can be nothing to limit them, which is the ſame, as ſaying, that they muſt be unlimited. Farther, whatever is in the nature or eſſence of the firſt cauſe, muſt be in him naturally and neceſſarily, that is, is an eſſential attribute of his nature, or could not but have been in his nature; for if it had been poſſible that his nature could have been without any particular attribute, it certainly would, by the very ſuppoſition. Now whatever is neceſſarily an attribute of Deity, is Deity. And limited Deity is a contradiction, as much as limited infinity. For infinity is unbounded, knowledge is unbounded, power is unbounded, goodneſs is unbounded. Theſe and the reſt are the neceſſary attributes of Deity. And as they are in him, they together form the idea of Supreme Deity. The Deity or firſt cauſe muſt therefore be poſſeſſed of every poſſible perfection in an infinite degree, all thoſe perfections being naturally infinite, and there being nothing to limit the Deity, or his perfections.

We cannot therefore avoid concluding, that the firſt cauſe is poſſeſſed of infinite intelligence, or knowledge, that his infinite mind is a treaſure of an infinity of truths, that he has ever had at all moments from all eternity, and ever will

will to all eternity have in his view, and in actual contemplation, all things that ever have exiſted, that do now, or ever ſhall exiſt, throughout infinite ſpace and duration, with all their connexions, relations, dependencies, gradations, proportions, differences, contraſts, cauſes, effects, and all circumſtances of all kinds, with the ideas of all things which are merely poſſible, or whoſe exiſtence does not imply a contradiction, though they have never actually exiſted, with all their poſſible relations, connexions, and circumſtances, whoſe idea is conceivable. In one word, the Divine mind muſt comprehend all things that by their nature are capable of being known, or conceived.

From the ſame neceſſary connexion, between the infinity of the firſt cauſe in one particular, and in all, we cannot avoid concluding, that he muſt be infinite in goodneſs; it being ſelf-evident, that goodneſs or benevolence muſt in any ſtate of things be a perfection, and the want of any degree of it a deficiency. To be infinite in goodneſs, is to poſſeſs ſuch benevolence of nature, as no conceivable or poſſible meaſure of goodneſs can exceed, or which can never be ſatisfied with exerting itſelf in acts of goodneſs, in a manner ſuitable to propriety and rectitude.

Here a proper diſtinction ought to be made between goodneſs and mercy. Though it is demonſtrably certain, that the Supreme Being is infinite in goodneſs, we muſt not imagine he is infinite

infinite in mercy. Becauſe we can ſuppoſe innumerable caſes, in which mercy to particulars would imply a defect of goodneſs upon the whole. In ſuch caſes, it is evident, that the greateſt goodneſs, upon the whole, will appear in refuſing mercy to particulars; not in granting it. We muſt therefore conclude, that mercy will certainly be refuſed to all ſuch offenders, whom juſtice and goodneſs to the whole require to be puniſhed. Thus the divine goodneſs is not bounded in its extent, but only regulated in its exertion by wiſdom and juſtice.

From the ſame neceſſity for concluding that the firſt cauſe muſt be uniformly and in all conſiſtent reſpects infinite, we muſt conclude, that he is poſſeſſed of an infinite degree of power; it being evident, that power is a perfection, and preferable to weakneſs. Infinite power ſignifies a power, at all moments from eternity to eternity, and throughout all ſpace, to produce, or perform whatever does not either in the nature of the thing imply an expreſs contradiction, as making ſomething to be, and not to be at the ſame time, or oppoſes ſome of the other perfections of his nature, as the doing ſomething unjuſt, cruel, or fooliſh. And indeed all ſuch things are properly impoſſibilities. Becauſe it is altogether as impoſſible that a Being unchangeably juſt, good, and wiſe, ſhould ever change ſo as to act contrary to his eſſential character, as that a thing ſhould be and not be, at the ſame time.

From

From the ſame neceſſity of concluding upon the uniform and univerſal infinity of the firſt cauſe, we cannot avoid concluding, that he is infinite in juſtice and truth, it being ſelf-evident, that truth is a perfection, and preferable to falſhood. The Divine nature muſt be the very ſtandard of truth; he muſt be entirely maſter of the exact ſtate of all things, and of all their relations and connexions; he muſt ſee the advantage of acting according to the true ſtate of things, and the right ſtate of the caſe, rather than according to any falſe or fictitious one; and muſt perceive, more generally and univerſally than any creature, that the conſequence of univerſal truth muſt be univerſal order, perfection and happineſs; and of univerſal falſhood and deception, univerſal miſery, and confuſion.

If there be any other natural or moral perfections, for which we have no names, and of which we have no ideas, it is evident, not only that they muſt be in the Divine nature; but that they muſt exiſt in Him in an unlimited degree. Or, to ſpeak properly, every poſſible and conſiſtent perfection takes its origin from its being an attribute of the Divine nature, and exiſts by the ſame original neceſſity of nature, as the infinite mind itſelf, the *ſubſtratum* of all perfection, exiſts. So that the neceſſity of exiſtence of the moral perfections of the Deity is the very ſame as that of the natural. Try to annihilate ſpace, or immenſity, in your mind; and you will find it impoſſible.

For it exiſts neceſſarily; and is an attribute of Deity. Try to annihilate the idea of rectitude in your mind; and you will find it equally impoſſible; the idea of rectitude, as ſomewhat real, will ſtill return upon the underſtanding. Rectitude is therefore a neceſſary attribute of Deity; and all the Divine moral attributes, of which we have any ideas, are only rectitude differently exerted. And the rectitude of the Divine nature is the proper baſis and foundation of moral good in the diſpoſition or practice of every moral agent in the univerſe; or, in other words, virtue, in an intelligent and free creature, of whatever rank in the ſcale of being, is nothing elſe than a conformity of diſpoſition and practice to the neceſſary, eternal, and unchangeable rectitude of the Divine nature.

Of every poſitive ſimple idea that can enter into our minds, it may be ſaid, that it is either ſomething belonging to the Divine nature (to ſpeak according to our imperfect way) or it is a work of his, or of ſome creature of his. We do not ſay, God made immenſity or ſpace, duration or eternity, truth, benevolence, rectitude, and the reſt. But theſe are clear, poſitive, ſimple ideas in our minds. Therefore they muſt exiſt. But if they exiſt, and yet are not made by God, they muſt be neceſſarily exiſtent. Now we know, that nothing exiſts neceſſarily, but what is an attribute of Deity, that is, one of our imperfect and partial conceptions of his infinite nature, which in-

groſſes

groſſes and ſwallows up all poſſible perfections.

Though we have here treated of the perfections of the firſt cauſe ſeparately, and one after the other, we are not to form to ourſelves an idea of the Supreme Being as conſiſting of ſeparable or diſcerpible parts, to be conceived of ſingly, and independently on one another. In treating of the human mind, we ſay it conſiſts of the faculties of underſtanding, will, memory, and ſo forth. But this evidently conveys a falſe idea of a mind. It is the whole mind that underſtands, wills, loves, hates, remembers, ſees, hears, and feels, and performs all the other functions of a living agent. And to conceive of its faculties as ſeparable from or independent on one another, is forming a very abſurd notion of mind which cannot be conſidered as conſiſting of parts, or as capable of diviſion. When we ſay whatever is an attribute of Deity is a Deity itſelf, which is demonſtrably true, we ought to underſtand it in the ſame manner as when we ſay, that whatever is a faculty of the human mind is the mind itſelf. Thus, though immenſity alone, truth alone, infinite power or wiſdom alone, tho' no one of theſe perfections alone is the full and complete idea of Deity, any more than underſtanding alone, will alone, or memory alone, is of the human mind, yet all the firſt, together with the other attributes, as they ſubſiſt in the Divine mind, are Deity, and all the latter, with the other

mental powers, are the human mind, and yet neither the former nor the latter can be conceived of as diviſible or made up of parts.

As the neceſſary exiſtence and abſolute perfection of God render it proper and reaſonable to aſcribe to him the creation of the univerſe; ſo his omnipreſence, infinite power, and wiſdom, make it reaſonable to conclude that he can, with the utmoſt facility, without interruption, for infinite ages, conduct and govern both the natural and moral world. Though the doctrine of providence is found in the writings of the wiſe Heathens, and is therefore commonly conſidered as a point of natural religion; yet, as revelation only ſets it in a clear and ſatisfactory light, I ſhall put off what I have to ſay upon it to the fourth book.

Our being utterly incapable of forming any ſhadow of an idea adequate to the true nature and eſſence of the Supreme Being, is no more an objection againſt the certainty of his exiſtence, than the impoſſibility of our conceiving of infinite beginningleſs duration, is againſt its reality. What our reaſon compels us to admit, muſt not be rejected, becauſe too big for our narrow minds to comprehend, nor indeed can we reject it, if we would.

Let us therefore do our utmoſt to conceive of the Supreme Being as the one independent, neceſſarily-exiſtent, unchangeable, eternal, immenſe, and univerſal mind, the foundation, or

ſubſtratum

ſubſtratum of infinite ſpace, duration, power, wiſdom, goodneſs, juſtice, and every other poſſible perfection; without beginning, without end, without parts, bounds, limits, or defects; the cauſe of all things, himſelf uncauſed; the preſerver of all things, himſelf depending on no one; the upholder of all things, himſelf upheld by no one; from all moments of eternity to all moments of eternity, enjoying the perfection of happineſs, without the poſſibility of addition or diminution; before all, above all, and in all; poſſeſſing eternity and immenſity, ſo as to be at once and for ever fully maſter of every point of the one and moment of the other; pervading all matter, but unaffected by all matter; beſtowing happineſs on all, without receiving from any; pouring forth without meaſure his good gifts, but never diminiſhing his riches; let us in a word think of him as the All, the Whole, the Perfection of perfection.

While we view his adorable excellencies according to our limited and partial manner, let us take care not to conceive of him as made up of parts, who is the moſt perfect unity. While we conſider, in ſucceſſion, his ſeveral attributes of power, wiſdom, goodneſs, and the reſt, let us take care not to form a complex or compounded idea of him, whoſe eſſence is abſolutely pure and ſimple. We are not to think of various attributes, and then ſuperadd the idea of God to them. The perfection or abſtract of wiſdom, power, goodneſs, and every other attribute, in one ſim-

ple idea, in the one univerſal mind, which fills infinitude, is the moſt perfect idea we can form of incomprehenſible Deity.

Here is a Deity truly worthy to be adored. What are the *Jupiters* and *Junos* of the Heathens to ſuch a God? What is the common notion of the object of worſhip; a venerable perſonage ſitting in heaven, and looking down upon the world below with a very acute and penetrating eye (which I doubt is the general notion among the unthinking part of Chriſtians) what is ſuch a God to the immenſe and unlimited nature we have been conſidering!

SECT. II.

An Idea of the Divine Scheme in Creation. The happineſs of conſcious Beings, the only End for which they were brought into Exiſtence. Happineſs, its foundation. Univerſal Concurrence of all Beings with the Divine Scheme abſolutely neceſſary to univerſal Happineſs.

SO far we have gone upon a rational foundation in eſtabliſhing the exiſtence of God, and his being poſſeſſed of all poſſible perfections. From the abſolute and unchangeable perfection and happineſs of God, it appears, as obſerved above, that his deſign, in creating, muſt have been, in conſiſtency with wiſdom and rectitude, to produce and communicate happineſs. This muſt be kept in view throughout the whole of the ſcheme.

ſcheme. When we think of the Creator as laying the plan of his univerſe, we muſt endeavour to enlarge our ideas ſo, as to conceive properly of what would be worthy of an infinitely capacious and perfect mind, to project. No partial, unconnected, or inconſiſtent deſign would have ſuited infinite wiſdom. The work of a God muſt be great, uniform, and perfect. It muſt, in one word, be an Univerſe.

In ſuch a plan, where all was to be full, and no void, or chaſm, it is evident, that there muſt be an extenſive variety, and innumerable different degrees of excellence and perfection in things animate and inanimate, ſuitable to the reſpective places to be filled by each, higher or lower, riſing one above another by a juſt and eaſy gradation. This we can accordingly trace in the ſmall part of the ſcale of being, which our obſervation takes in. From crude, unprepared duſt, or earth, we proceed to various *ſtrata* impregnated with ſome higher qualities. From thence to pebbles, and other foſſil ſubſtances, which ſeem to be endowed with a ſort of vegetative principle. Next we proceed from the loweſt and ſimpleſt of vegetables, up to the higheſt and moſt curious; among which the ſenſitive plant ſeems to partake of ſomething like animal life. As the polype, and ſome other reptiles, ſeem to deſcend a little, as if to meet the vegetable creation. Then we come to animals endowed with the ſenſe of feeling and taſting only, as various ſhell-

fiſh. After them follow ſuch as have more ſenſes, till we come to thoſe that poſſeſs ſomewhat analogous to human faculties, as the faithfulneſs of dogs, the generous courage of the horſe, the ſagacity of the elephant, and the miſchievous low cunning of the fox and ape. Suppoſe a human creature, of the meaneſt natural abilities, from its birth deprived of the faculty of ſpeech, how much would it be ſuperior to a monkey? How much is a *Hottentot* ſuperior? From ſuch a human mind we may proceed to thoſe which are capable of the common arts of life; and from them onward to ſuch as have ſome degree of capacity for ſome one branch of art or ſcience. Then we may go on to thoſe, who are endowed with minds ſuſceptible of various parts of knowledge. From which there are a great many degrees of natural capacities, riſing one above another, before we reach ſuch a divine ſpirit as that of a *Newton*. Perhaps ſome of the lower orders of angelic natures might not be raiſed above him at a much greater diſtance, than he was above ſome of his ſpecies.

Even among the inhabitants of different elements there is an analogy kept up. Various ſpecies of fiſhes approach very nearly to beaſts, who live on dry land, in form and conſtitution. Several ſpecies unite the aquatic and terreſtrial characters in one. The bat and owl join the bird and beaſt kinds; ſo that the different natures run

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almoſt into one another; but never meet ſo cloſely, as to confound the diſtinction.

Thus, ſo far as we can trace the divine plan of creation, all is full, and all connected. And we may reaſonably conclude, that the ſame uniformity amidſt variety takes place through the univerſal ſcale of being, above our ſpecies, as well as below it, in other worlds as well as ours. This was to be expected in an univerſal ſyſtem planned by one immenſe and all-comprehending mind.

Conſidering the unbounded and unlimited perfections of the firſt cauſe, who has exiſted from eternity, has had an infinite ſpace to act in, an infinity of wiſdom to ſuggeſt ſchemes, and infinite power to put thoſe ſchemes in execution for effecting whatever infinite goodneſs might excite him to propoſe: conſidering theſe things, what ideas may we form of the actual exertion of ſuch perfections? What may they not have produced; what may they not be every moment producing; what may they not produce throughout an endleſs eternity! There is no determinate time we can fix for infinite wiſdom, power, and goodneſs to have begun to exert themſelves in creating, but what will imply an eternity paſt, without any exertion of creating power. And it is not eaſy to ſuppoſe infinite goodneſs to have let an eternity paſs without exerting itſelf in bringing any one creature into exiſtence. Whither then does this lead us? There is no point in eternity paſt, in which we can conceive, that it would have been improper

improper for infinite wiſdom, power, and goodneſs to have been exerted. And he, who from all eternity has had power, in all probability has from all eternity had will or inclination, to communicate his goodneſs. Let us try to imagine then, what may be the whole effect of infinite power, wiſdom, and goodneſs, exerted through an infinite duration paſt, and in an unbounded ſpace. What ought to be the number of productions of infinite power, wiſdom, and goodneſs, throughout immenſity and eternity? What may we ſuppoſe the preſent degree of perfection of beings, who have exiſted from periods diſtant from the preſent beyond all reach of human numbers, and have been conſtantly improving? What degrees of knowledge, of power, of goodneſs, may ſuch beings have by this time acquired? Let readers, who have accuſtomed themſelves to ſuch trains of thinking, purſue theſe views to their full extent. To add here all that may be deduced from ſuch conſiderations, may not be neceſſary.

It is afterwards demonſtrated, that the happineſs of the proper creatures was the ſole view, which the Divine wiſdom could have in producing an univerſe. Now, happineſs being a primary or ſimple idea, it neither needs, nor is capable of any explanation, or of being expreſſed, but by ſome ſynonymous term, which likewiſe communicates a ſimple idea, as ſatisfaction, pleaſure, or ſuch like. But it is of good uſe to underſtand

underſtand what makes real happineſs, and how to attain it. The foundation or ground of happineſs, then, is "A conſcious being's finding it-"ſelf in that ſtate, and furniſhed with all thoſe "advantages, which are the moſt ſuitable to its "nature, and the moſt conducive to its improve-"ment and perfection."

Here is a ſubject for an angel to preach upon, and the whole human race to be his audience. It is the very ſubject, which the ambaſſador of heaven came to this world to treat of, and explain to mankind.

Happineſs is no imaginary or arbitrary thing. It is what it is by the unalterable nature of things, and the Divine ordination. In treating of ſuch ſubjects, it is common to ſpeak of the nature of things ſeparately from the poſitive will of the Supreme being. To underſtand this matter rightly, it is neceſſary to remember, that, in the nature of things, the Divine nature is included, or rather is the foundation of all. Thus when it is here ſaid, that happineſs is fixed according to the unalterable nature of things, as well as determined by the poſitive will of God, the meaning is, that the Supreme Being, in determining what ſhould be the happineſs of the creature, and how he ſhould attain it, has acted according to the abſolute rectitude of his own nature.

But to return, no creature is, or can be ſo formed, as to continue ſteddily and uniformly happy, through the whole of its exiſtence, at the

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ſame time that it is in a ſtate unſuitable to its nature, and deprived of all the advantages neceſſary for its improvement and perfection. It is a direct and ſelf-evident impoſſibility, that ſuch a creature ſhould be. Were the foundation of happineſs dependent upon the reſpective imaginations of different creatures, what occaſion for all the pompous apparatus we know has been made for preparing the human ſpecies for happineſs? Had it been poſſible, or conſiſtent with the divine perfections and nature of things, that mere fancy ſhould have been a foundation for happineſs, there had needed no more than to have lulled the creature into a pleaſing deluſion, a golden dream, out of which he ſhould never have waked. And there is no doubt, but, if the happineſs of our ſpecies and other rational agents could, properly, have been brought about in this, or any other leſs operoſe manner, than that which is appointed, there is not the leaſt doubt, I ſay, but the unbounded wiſdom and goodneſs of the Governor of the world, who brought them into being on purpoſe for happineſs, and cannot but chooſe the eaſieſt and beſt ways for gaining his ends, would have brought them to happineſs in ſuch a way. But it is evident, that then man could not have been man, that is, an intelligent, free agent; therefore could not have filled his place in the ſcale of being; for as he ſtands in the place between angels and brutes, he muſt have been exactly what he is, or not have been at all. An infinitely

infinitely perfect Author, if he creates at all, will neceſſarily produce a work free from chaſms and blunders. And to think of the God of truth as producing a rational, intelligent creature, whoſe whole happineſs ſhould be a deception; what can be conceived more abſurd, or impious? If ſuch a creature is formed for contemplating truth, could he likewiſe have been brought into exiſtence, to be irreſiſtibly led into a deluſion? To what end a faculty of reaſoning, to be, by his very make and ſtate, drawn into unavoidable error?

Beſides all this, let any man try to conceive in his own mind the poſſibility of bringing about a general and univerſal happineſs upon any other footing, than the concurrence of all things, in one general and uniform courſe, to one great and important end; let any man try to conceive this, I ſay, and he will find it in vain. If the foundation of univerſal happineſs be, Every being's finding itſelf in ſuch circumſtances as beſt ſuit its nature and ſtate, is it poſſible, that every being ſhould find itſelf in thoſe circumſtances, if every being acted a part unſuitable to its nature and ſtate? On the contrary, a deviation from that conduct, which ſuits a reaſonable nature, is the very definition of moral evil. And every deviation tends to produce diſorder and unhappineſs. And every leſſer degree of ſuch deviation tends to draw on greater, and this deviation into irregularity would in the end produce univerſal unhappineſs;

happineſs; but that it is over-ruled by ſuperior wiſdom and goodneſs. So that, inſtead of the ſophiſtical maxim, "That private vices are pub-"lick benefits," we may eſtabliſh one much more juſt; "That the ſmalleſt irregularities, unre-"ſtrained, and endcouraged, tend to produce "univerſal confuſion and miſery."

In conſequence of the above account of the true foundation of happineſs, it is plain, that different natures will require a different proviſion for their happineſs. The mere animal will want only what is neceſſary for the ſupport of the individual, and the ſpecies. Whatever is ſuperadded to that, will be found ſuperfluous and uſeleſs, and will go unenjoyed by the animal. But for a higher nature, ſuch as that of man, another ſort of apparatus muſt be provided. Inaſmuch as he partakes of the animal, as well as the rational nature, it is plain he cannot be completely happy with a proviſion made for only one half of his nature. He will therefore need whatever may be requiſite for the ſupport and comfort of the body, as well as for the improvement of the mind. For the happineſs of an angel, or other ſuperior power, a proviſion greatly ſuperior, and more ſublime, than all that we can conceive, may be neceſſary. And the higher the nature, the more noble a happineſs it is capable of. The perfect happineſs enjoyed by the Supreme Being is the neceſſary conſequence of the abſolute and unlimited perfection of his nature.

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The Supreme Mind, in laying the plan of an univerſe, muſt evidently have propoſed a general ſcheme, which ſhould take in all the various orders of being; a ſcheme in which all, or as many as poſſible of the particulars ſhould come to happineſs, but in ſuch a manner, as that the happineſs of the whole ſhould be conſiſtent with that of individuals, and that of individuals with that of the whole, and with the nature of things, or, more properly, with the Divine rectitude. We cannot imagine infinite Wiſdom propoſing a particular ſcheme for every individual, when the end might be gained by a general one. For, to gain various ends by one means, is a proof of wiſdom. As, on the contrary, to have recourſe to different means, to gain an end, which might have been obtained by one, is of weakneſs.

Let the univerſal plan of things have been what it would, it is evident, that, in order to general and univerſal perfection, it is abſolutely neceſſary, that, in general, all things inanimate, animate, and rational, concur in one deſign, and co-operate, in a regular and uniform manner, to carry on the grand view. To ſuppoſe any one part or member to be left out of the general ſcheme, left to itſelf, or to proceed at random, is abſurd. The conſequence of ſuch an error muſt unavoidably be, a confuſion in the grand machinery, extending as far as the ſphere of ſuch a part or member extended. And as it is probable that no created being, eſpecially of the

loweſt ranks, has extenſive enough views of things, to know exactly the part it ought to act, it is plain, that proper means and contrivances muſt have been uſed by Him who ſees through the whole, for keeping thoſe beings to their proper ſphere, and bringing them to perform their reſpective parts, ſo as to concur to the perfection and happineſs of the whole.

The inanimate is the loweſt part of the creation, or the loweſt order of being. As it is of itſelf incapable of happineſs, it is plain that all it is fit for, is to contribute to the happineſs of beings capable of enjoying it. To make inanimate matter perform its part in the grand ſcheme, nothing will anſwer, but ſuperior power or force, as, by the very ſuppoſition of its being inanimate, it is only capable of being acted upon, not of acting. So that every motion, every tendency to motion, in every ſingle atom of matter in the univerſe, muſt be effected by the agency of ſome living principle. And without being acted by ſome living principle, no one atom of matter in the univerſe could have changed its ſtate from motion to reſt, or from reſt to motion; but muſt have remained for ever in the ſtate it was firſt created in.

The Supreme Mind being, as we have ſeen, univerſally preſent in every point of infinite ſpace, where there is, or is not, any created being, material or immaterial, muſt be intimately preſent to every atom of matter, and every ſpiritual being

ing, throughout the univerſe. His power is, as we have ſeen, neceſſarily infinite, or irreſiſtible. And his wiſdom perfect. It is therefore evidently no more, nor ſo much, for a Being, endowed with ſuch an advantageous ſuperiority over the material creation, to actuate the vaſt univerſe, as for a man to move his finger or eye-lid. His preſence extending through infinitude, puts every atom of matter in the univerſe within his reach. His power being irreſiſtible, enables him to wield the moſt enormous maſſes, as whole planets at once, with any degree of rapidity, with as little difficulty, or rather infinitely leſs, than a man can the lighteſt ball. And his wiſdom being abſolutely perfect, he cannot but know exactly in what manner to direct, regulate, and actuate the whole material machine of the world, ſo as it may the beſt anſwer his various, wiſe, and noble purpoſes. And it is certain, that all the motions and revolutions, all the tendencies and inclinations, as they are commonly, for want of better terms, called; all the laws of nature, the coheſion of bodies, the attraction and gravitation of planets, the efflux of light from luminous bodies, with all the laws they are ſubject to, muſt be finally reſolved into the action of the Supreme Being, or of beings employed by him, whatever intervening inſtrumentality may be made uſe of. Thus the inanimate creation is wrought to the Divine purpoſe by ſuperior power, or force.

To bring the animal, irrational natures to perform their part in the general ſcheme, it was neceſſary to endow them with a few ſtrong and powerful inclinations, or appetites, which ſhould from time to time ſolicit them to eaſe the pain of deſire by gratifying them; and to give them capacity enough to conſult their own preſervation by means fit for the purpoſe, which are eaſily found. Beſides inſtinct, they ſeem to be endowed with a kind of faculty in ſome meaſure analogous to our reaſon, which reſtrains and regulates inſtinct, ſo that we obſerve, they ſhew ſomething like thought and ſagacity in their purſuit of their gratifications, and even ſhew ſome traces of reflexion, gratitude, faithfulneſs, and the like. Their apprehenſions being but weak, and their ſphere of action narrow, they have it not generally in their power, as creatures of ſuperior capacities, and endowed with extenſive liberty, to go out of the track preſcribed them, and run into irregularity. By theſe means, the brute creatures are worked to the Divine purpoſe, and made to fill their ſubordinate ſphere, and contribute, as far as that extends, to the regularity, perfection, and happineſs of the whole.

We come now to what we reckon the third rank of being, the rational creation; which muſt likewiſe, according to the Divine ſcheme, concur with the other parts, and contribute in their ſphere to the perfection and happineſs of the univerſal ſyſtem.

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The rational world being the part the moſt neceſſary, and of the greateſt importance, as their happineſs was the principal view the Supreme Being muſt have had in the creation, their concurrence is what can the leaſt be diſpenſed with. Should the whole material ſyſtem run to ruin; ſhould ſuns be loſt in eternal darkneſs; planets and comets ruſh out on all ſides into the infinite expanſe, or the fixed ſtars leave their ſtations, and daſh againſt one another; and ſhould an univerſal ſentence of annihilation be paſſed upon the animal world; the deſtruction of both the inanimate and animal creation would not be ſo great a diſturbance of the Divine ſcheme, would not be ſuch an important breach of the general order and regularity neceſſary to univerſal perfection and happineſs, as a general defect of concurrence, or irregularity and oppoſition, in the rational world, for whoſe happineſs the inferior creation was brought into being, and whoſe happineſs, ſhould it totally miſcarry, the Divine ſcheme muſt be totally defeated.

SECT. III.

Of the Nature of Man, and Immortality of the Soul.

IN order to underſtand what it is for our ſpecies to concur, in a proper manner, with the Divine ſcheme, and to obſerve what wiſe means have been contrived by the Divine wiſdom and

goodneſs for bringing us to the requiſite concurrence, in conſiſtence with our nature and ſtate, it will be neceſſary to conſider a little the human nature and character.

It is commonly ſaid, that we underſtand matter better than ſpirit; that we know leſs of our ſouls than of our bodies. But this is only a vulgar error. And the truth is, that we know nothing of the internal ſubſtance of either one or the other. But we know enough of the properties and ſtate of both, to know how to ſeek the good of both, would we but act according to our knowledge.

That which raiſes the human make above the brute creatures, is our having capacities, which enable us to take more extenſive views, and penetrate farther into the natures and connexions of things, than inferior creatures; our having a faculty of abſtract reflexion; ſo that we can at pleaſure, call up to our minds any ſubject we have formerly known, which, for aught that appears, the inferior creatures cannot do, nor excite in themſelves the idea of any abſent object, but what their ſenſes, either directly or indirectly, recal to their memory; and laſtly, that we are naturally, till we come to be debauched, more maſters of our paſſions and appetites, or more free to chooſe and refuſe, than the inferior creatures.

It is impoſſible to put together any conſiſtent theory of our nature, or ſtate, without taking in

the thought of our being intended for immortality. If we attempt to think of our exiſtence as terminating with this life, all is abrupt, confuſed, and unaccountable. But when the preſent is conſidered as a ſtate of diſcipline, and introduction to endleſs improvement hereafter; tho' we cannot ſay, that we ſee through the whole ſcheme, we yet ſee ſo much of wiſdom and deſign, as to lead us to conclude with reaſon, that the whole is contrived in the moſt proper manner for gaining the important end of preparing us for immortal happineſs and glory.

And that it is reaſonable to believe our ſpecies formed for immortality, will appear firſt, by conſidering the nature of the mind itſelf, which is indeed, properly ſpeaking, the being; for the body is only a ſyſtem of matter inhabited and actuated by the living ſpirit.

That the mind may, in a dependence upon the infinite Author of life and being, continue to exiſt after the diſſolution of the body, there is no reaſon to queſtion. For individuality and indiſcerpibility being inſeparable properties of mind, it is plain that a mind can die only by annihilation. But no one can ſhew that there is any connexion between death and annihilation. On the contrary, the mortal body itſelf is certainly not annihilated at death, nor any way altered in its eſſence, only its condition and circumſtances are not the ſame as when animated by the living principle, which is alſo the caſe of

the mind. But if the mind be a principle originally capable of thought and ſelf-motion by its own nature; it follows, that it may, for any thing we know, think and act in one ſtate as well as another; in a future as well as in the preſent. If it were poſſible to conceive of a material, thinking, and ſelf-moving principle, which is a flat contradiction, inactivity being inſeparable from the idea of matter; yet it would not thence follow, that the thinking principle muſt loſe its exiſtence at the diſſolution of the groſs body. The moral proofs for the future exiſtence of the human ſpecies would ſtill remain in force, whether we were conſidered as embodied ſpirits, or as mere body. Nor is there any contradiction in the idea of an immortal body, any more than of an immortal ſpirit; nor is any being immortal, but by dependence on the Divine ſupporting power. Nor does the notion of the poſſibility of a faculty of thinking ſuperadded to matter at all affect the point in queſtion. Though it is certain, that a pretended ſyſtem of matter with a thinking faculty muſt either be nothing more than matter animated by ſpirit, or a ſubſtance of a quite oppoſite nature to all that we call matter, about which we cannot reaſon, having no ideas of it. Farther, we have reaſon to conclude, that the body depends on the mind for life and motion; not the mind on the body. We find, that the mind is not impaired by the loſs of whole limbs of the body; that the mind is often very active, when the body is at reſt; that the mind corrects

corrects the errors, preſented to it through the ſenſes; that even in the decay, diſorder, or total ſuſpenſion, of the ſenſes; the mind is affected juſt as ſhe might be expected to be, when obliged to uſe untoward inſtruments, and to have wrong repreſentations, and falſe impreſſions, forced upon her, or when deprived of all traces, and quite put out of her element. For, the caſe of perſons intoxicated with liquor, or in a dream, or raving in a fever, or diſtracted, all which have a reſemblance to one another, may be conceived of in the following manner. The mind, or thinking being, which at preſent receives impreſſions only by means of the material organ of the brain, and the ſenſes through which intelligence is communicated into the brain; the mind, I ſay, being at preſent confined to act only within the dark cell of the brain, and to receive very lively impreſſions from it, which is the conſequence of a law of nature, to us inexplicable; may be exactly in the ſame manner affected by the impreſſions made on the brain by a diſeaſe, or other accidental cauſe, as if they were made by ſome real external object. For example, if in a violent fever, or a frenzy, the ſame impreſſions be, by a preternatural flow of the animal ſpirits, made on the retina of the eye, as would be made if the perſon was to be in a field of battle, where two armies were engaged; and if at the ſame time it happened, that by the ſame means the ſame impreſſions ſhould be made on the auditory nerve, as would be made if the

perſon were within hearing of the noiſe of drums, the clangor of trumpets, and the ſhouts of men; how ſhould the ſpiritual being, immured as ſhe is in her dark cell, and unuſed to ſuch a deception as this, how ſhould ſhe know it was a deception, any more, than an *Indian*, who had never ſeen a picture, could find at the firſt view, that the canvas was really flat, though it appeared to exhibit a landſkip of ſeveral miles in extent? It is therefore conceivable that the mind may be ſtrongly and forcibly affected by a material ſyſtem, without being itſelf material. And that the mind is not material, appears farther, in that ſhe abſtracts herſelf from the body, when ſhe would apply moſt cloſely to thought; that the ſoul is capable of purely abſtract ideas, as of rectitude, order, virtue, vice, and the like; to which matter furniſhes no archetype, nor has any connexion with them; that it is affected by what is confeſſedly not matter, as the ſenſe of words heard, or read in books, which if it were material it could not be; which ſhews our minds to be quite different beings from the body, and naturally independent on it; that we can conceive of matter in a way, which we cannot of ſpirit, and contrariwiſe; matter being ſtill to be, without any contradiction, conceived of as diviſible and inactive; whereas it is impoſſible to apply thoſe ideas to ſpirit, without a direct abſurdity, which ſhews, that the mind is the ſame, conſcious, indiviſible, identical being, though the body

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is ſubject to continual change, addition, and diminution; that the mind continues to improve in the moſt noble and valuable accompliſhments, when the body is going faſt to decay; that, even the moment before the diſſolution of the body, the vigour of the mind ſeems often wholly unimpaired; that the intereſts of the mind and body are always different, and often oppoſite, as in the caſe of being obliged to give up life for truth. Theſe conſiderations, attended to duly, ſhew, that we have no reaſon to queſtion the poſſibility of the living principle's ſubſiſting after the diſſolution of the material vehicle.

As to the difficulty ariſing from the conſideration of the cloſe connexion between the body and ſoul, and the impreſſions made by the one upon the other, which has led ſome to queſtion whether they are in reality at all diſtinct beings, it is to be remembred, that this connexion, which is abſolutely neceſſary in the preſent ſtate, is wholly owing to the divine diſpoſal, and not to any likeneſs, much leſs ſameneſs, of the thinking, intelligent agent with the groſs corporeal vehicle. If it had ſo pleaſed the Author of our being, he could have fixed ſuch a natural connexion between our minds and the moon, or planets, that their various revolutions and aſpects might have affected us, in the ſame manner as now the health or diſorder of our bodies does. But this would not have made the moon and planets a part of us. No more do the mutual impreſſions made reciprocally

procally by the mind and body, prove them to be the ſame, or that the human nature is all body, eſpecially conſidering that, as already obſerved, in many caſes we evidently perceive an independency and difference between them.

It cannot be pretended that there is any abſurdity in conceiving of the animating principle as exiſting even before conception in the womb, nor of a new union commencing at a certain period, by a fixed law of nature, between it and a corporeal vehicle, which union may be ſuppoſed to continue, according to certain eſtabliſhed laws of nature, for a long courſe of years; and may be broke, or diſſolved, in the ſame regular manner; ſo that the ſyſtem of matter, to which the animating principle was united, may be no more to it, than any other ſyſtem of matter.

It is remarkable, that all living creatures, eſpecially our ſpecies, on their firſt appearance in life, ſeem at a loſs, as if the mind was not, in the infant ſtate, quite engaged and united to its new vehicle, and therefore could not command and wield it properly. Sleep, infirm old age, ſevere ſickneſs, and fainting, ſeem, according to certain eſtabliſhed laws of nature, partly to looſen, or relax the union between the living principle, the mind, and the material vehicle; and, as it were, to ſet them at a greater diſtance from one another, or make them more indifferent to one another, as if (ſo to ſpeak) almoſt beyond the ſphere of one another's attraction. Death is nothing

thing more than the total diſſolution of this tie, occaſioned, in a natural way, by ſome alteration in the material frame; not in the mind; whereby that which formed the nexus, or union, whatever that may be, is removed or diſengaged. It is probable, that the anxiety and diſtreſs, under which the mind commonly feels itſelf at death, is owing rather to the manner and proceſs of the diſſolution, than to the diſſolution itſelf. For we obſerve, that very aged perſons, and infants, often die without a ſtruggle. The union between ſoul and body, being already weak, is eaſily diſſolved. And if ſleep be, as it ſeems, a partial diſſolution of this union, or a ſetting the mind and body at a greater diſtance from one another, the reaſon why it gives no diſturbance is, that it comes on in ſuch a manner as not forcibly to tear in pieces, but gently to relax, the ligatures, whatever they are, between the material and ſpiritual natures. That there is an analogy between ſleep and death, is evident from obſerving, that ſleep ſometimes goes on to death, as in lethargic caſes, and in the effects of ſtrong opiates. And it is remarkable, that the life of a perſon, who has taken too large a doſe of opium, cannot be ſaved but by forcibly waking him; as if the mutual action of the mind and body upon one another was the medium of the union; and that, if their mutual action upon one another comes to be leſſened to a certain degree, they become indifferent to one another, and the union between them ceaſes of courſe,

courſe, as two companions walking together in the dark may come to loſe one another, by dropping their converſation, and keeping a profound ſilence.

It is probable, that the condition, in which the mind, juſt diſengaged from the body, feels itſelf, is very much like to that of dreaming; all confuſion, uncertainty, and incoherence of ideas; and that, in ſome meaſure, like the infant-mind newly entered upon a ſtate wholly unknown, it finds itſelf greatly at a loſs, and exerts itſelf with much difficulty and diſadvantage; till a little time and habit qualifies it for a new and untried ſcene of action *.

If the true account of the human nature be, that the ſpiritual, active, thinking principle is united to a ſubtile etherial vehicle, whoſe reſidence is in the brain, and that death is the departure of the ſoul and ſpirit from the body; which was the notion of the *Platonic* philoſophers,

* The author is not aſhamed to confeſs, that he now thinks his former opinion concerning the ſtate of the dead, as repreſented in theſe paragraphs, erroneous; though he chooſes not to alter the text on that account; thinking it hardly fair to leſſen the value of former editions, by adding to ſucceeding ones, what is better laid before readers in ſeparate publications. The author is now inclinable to think Doctor Law's opinion, in his Theory of Religion, more rational, as well as more ſcriptural, than the generally received notion, of the ſoul's being in a full ſtate of conſciouſneſs and activity, between death and reſurrection. It is a point of mere ſpeculation, no way materially affecting either faith or manners.

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and *Jewiſh* rabbi's, and ſeems to be countenanced by the apoſtle *Paul*; if this be the true account of the human make, there is no difficulty in conceiving the poſſibility of the mind's thinking and acting in a ſtate of total ſeparation from the groſs terreſtrial body, notwithſtanding the ſeeming difficulty of a ſuſpenſion of thought in profound ſleep, or in a fainting fit. For the embodied and ſeparate ſtates are ſo very different, there is no reaſoning from one to the other on every point. It may be impoſſible for the mind, while impriſoned in the body, in a great diſorder of the animal frame, to join ideas together, for want of its traces in the brain, and other implements of reaſoning, to which it has all along been accuſtomed, and which it cannot do without; and yet, it may be poſſible for the ſame mind, when freed from its dark priſon, to go to work in a quite different manner, to receive impreſſions immediately from the objects themſelves, which it received before by the intervention of the ſenſes, and to contrive for itſelf memorial traces, and the other neceſſary apparatus for improvement, in a much more perfect manner. It may then be able to penetrate into the internal ſubſtance, and examine the minute arrangement of the ſmalleſt corpuſcles of all kinds of material ſyſtems. By applying its ductile and delicate vehicle, which may be conſidered as all ſenſation, all eye, all ear, and touch, it may accurately take off not only the real form, but the internal nature, and

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ſtate of things, with all their properties, and preſent them to the immediate intuition of the perceptive principle, juſt as they are in themſelves; whereas at preſent the mind apprehends things only as the dull and imperfect bodily ſenſes exhibit them to it. It may be able to contract itſelf to the examination of the internal ſtructure of the body of the minuteſt animalcule; and it may, as it goes on to improve and enlarge its powers, come to ſuch a perfection, as to diffuſe its actual preſence and intelligence over a kingdom, or round the whole globe, ſo as to perceive all that paſſes in every ſpot on the face of it. It may enter into, and examine, the ſublime ideas which are treaſured up in the mind of an angel, and as now, by peruſing a book, it acquires new views, and by ſlow degrees perfects thoſe it had before acquired; ſo it may hereafter attain ſuch a capacity of comprehenſion, as to be able to take off at one intuition a whole new ſcience. Thus new powers and faculties, for which we have at preſent no names, may be for ever ſpringing up in the mind, which will ever find new employment in examining and enquiring into truth. For the object of the mind is infinite.

That our ſpecies ſhould have another ſtate to enter upon, wholly different from the preſent, is ſo far from being unreaſonable to expect, that it is analogous to the whole ſcheme of nature. For there is no ſpecies, as far as we know, that do not live in different ſucceſſive ſtates. But to inſtance

inſtance only in the inſect tribe, many of that ſpecies, beſides their animalcule ſtate, before they be propagated from the male, in which they differ in nothing from the whole animal creation, appear firſt as eggs, and afterwards as living reptiles, capable of motion and feeding; then they enter upon their nymph or aurelia ſtate, and continue for ſeveral months as it were coffin'd up in their ſlough, and totally inſenſible. At laſt they burſt their priſon, expand their wings, and fly away in the ſhape of butterflies, dragon-flies, or other winged inſects, according to their ſeveral ſpecies. This ſucceſſion of ſtates, of which the laſt is the moſt perfect, has been conſidered as emblematical of our mortal life, our intermediate ſtate, and reſurrection to immortality.

But the moſt irrefragable proofs for the future immortality of the human ſpecies, ſeparate from thoſe which revelation yields, are taken from the conſideration of the perfections of the Maker and Governor of the world, who deſigns all his works according to infinite wiſdom and goodneſs, and according to the true ſtate of things. No one can ſuppoſe that the God of truth would have allowed that a whole order of rational creatures ſhould, by any means whatever, be miſled into an univerſal perſuaſion of a ſtate, for which they never were intended. For it is evident, that if we are not formed for a future immortal ſtate, we can have no more concern with any thing beyond death, than with the world in the moon,

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and conſequently, our whole buſineſs being with the preſent life, it is not to be ſuppoſed, that our infinitely wiſe-Creator would have ſuffered our attention to have been taken off from it, by our being led into the notion of any other; much leſs, that our whole ſpecies ſhould be irreſiſtibly poſſeſſed with the ſame uſeleſs and hurtful deluſion: nor that he would have univerſally impreſſed their minds with a falſe notion of an account to be hereafter given of all their thoughts, words, and actions. Had he wanted them to conform themſelves to his general ſcheme in the government of the world, he could have brought that about, and certainly would, by any other means, rather than by ſuffering them to be miſled into a ſeries of groundleſs imaginations and deluſions. Nor would the infinitely-wiſe Creator have given us theſe vaſt and inſatiable deſires after endleſs improvement in knowledge, this reach of thought, which expatiates through creation, and extends itſelf beyond the limits of the univerſe; nor would he have fired our ſouls with the proſpect of an endleſs exiſtence, for carrying on thoſe improvements, only to curſe us with a cruel diſappointment. Nor would he have made the human ſoul for himſelf; fixed its deſires and wiſhes upon the enjoyment of his own perfections; drawn and engaged it to love, admire, and breathe after the fruition of him; raiſed it to this lofty heighth of ambition, only to throw it down, baffled and diſappointed, into a ſtate of

inſenſibility and annihilation. Nor would he have formed the mind with a capacity for continual advances in goodneſs, and nearer approaches to himſelf, only to give us an opportunity of fitting ourſelves for a future ſtate of perfection and happineſs, to which according as we approached nearer and nearer, we ſhould approach nearer and nearer to the total diſappointment of all our labours and all our hopes, and find the whole at laſt to have been no other than a golden dream.

The only reaſon why any one has recourſe to artifice and deceit, is, that he has not ſagacity enough to gain his ends by proceeding in a fair and open manner. Whoever is maſter of his ſcheme, has no need of tricks and arts to compaſs his deſigns. And who will dare to affirm, that Infinite Wiſdom had no way of bringing about his important deſigns for the good of his univerſe, but by deluding his reaſonable creatures, or ſuffering them to be univerſally deluded, which is the ſame, into the belief of a future Utopia? We know of nothing in nature analogous to this. Whatever our ſpecies, or any other, are liable to be miſtaken in, is owing to the mere imperfection of ſenſe, or underſtanding, unavoidable in beings of inferior rank: but we have no idea of a whole ſpecies irreſiſtibly led into a poſitive error, eſpecially of ſuch conſequence as that of the expectation of a future ſtate, if it were an error. And here it is highly worthy of remark, that it is not the weak, the

ſhort-ſighted, and the ignorant part of the human kind, that are moſt inclinable to the perſuaſion of the immortality of the ſoul, as might have been expected, were it an error; but quite otherwiſe. While the moſt ſordid, degenerate, and barbarous of the ſpecies have overlooked, or not been ſufficiently perſuaded of it; the wiſeſt and greateſt of mankind have been believers and teachers of this important doctrine; which ſhews it in a light wholly unaccountable, if it be ſuppoſed an error.

The irregular diſtribution of happineſs and miſery in the preſent ſtate renders it highly probable, that this is only a part, not the whole of the Divine oeconomy with reſpect to our ſpecies.

Do we not find, that in the preſent ſtate the higheſt degree of goodneſs is, in ſome caſes, attended with the greateſt unhappineſs? For tho' virtue muſt, in general, be owned to be the likelieſt means for procuring happineſs in the preſent, as well as future ſtate; yet there are numerous exceptions to this rule. I appeal to the experience of every man, who, from a courſe of thoughtleſsneſs and libertiniſm, has had the happineſs to be brought to ſome concern about the intereſts of futurity, whether he does not now ſuffer a thouſand times more of the anguiſh of remorſe from a reflexion upon the leaſt failure, than he did formerly for the groſſeſt enormities. If ſo, it is evident, that improvement in virtue brings with it ſuch a delicacy of ſentiment, as muſt

muſt often break in upon the tranquillity of the mind, and produce an uneaſineſs to which the hardned ſinner is wholly a ſtranger. So that in this inſtance, we ſee that virtue is not in the preſent life its own reward, which infers the neceſſity of a future reward in a life to come.

Nor is the permiſſion of perſecution or tyranny, by which the beſt of mankind always ſuffer the moſt ſeverely, while wickedneſs reigns triumphant, at all reconcileable with the goodneſs of the univerſal Governor, upon any footing, but that of a future ſtate, wherein the ſufferings, to which the mere incapacity of reſiſting, or the ſtrict adherence to truth, has expoſed multitudes of the ſpecies, of the beſt of the ſpecies, ſhall be ſuitably made up for. When an *Alexander*, or a *Cæſar*, is let looſe upon his fellow-creatures, when he pours deſolation, like a deluge, over one ſide of the globe, and plunges half the human ſpecies in a ſea of their own blood, what muſt be the whole amount of the calamity ſuffered by millions, involved in the various woes of war, of which great numbers muſt be of the tender ſex, and helpleſs age! What muſt be the terror of thoſe, who dread the hour, when the mercileſs ſavage, habituated to ſcenes of cruelty, will give orders to his hellhounds to begin the general maſſacre? What the carnage, when it is begun? Men ſlaughtered in heaps in the ſtreets and fields; women raviſhed and murdered before their huſbands faces; children daſhed againſt the

walls in the ſight of the parents; cities wrapt in flames; the ſhouts of the conquerors; the groans of the dying; the ghaſtly viſages of the dead; univerſal horror, miſery, and deſolation. All to gain a ſpot of ground, an uſeleſs addition of revenue, or even the viſionary ſatisfaction of a ſounding name, to ſwell the pride of a wretched worm, who will himſelf quickly ſink among the heaps his fury has made, himſelf a prey to the univerſal leveller of mankind. And what is all hiſtory full of, but ſuch horrid ſcenes as theſe? Has not ambition or ſuperſtition ſet mankind, in all ages and nations, in arms againſt one another; turned this world into a general ſhambles, and fattened every ſoil with ſlaughtered thouſands?

The blood-thirſty inquiſitor, who has grown grey in the ſervice of the Mother of abominations, who has long made it his boaſt, that none of her prieſts has brought ſo many hundreds of victims to her horrid altars, as himſelf; the venerable butcher ſits on his bench. The helpleſs innocent is brought bound from his dungeon, where no voice of comfort is heard, no friendly eye glances compaſſion, where damp, and ſtench, perpetual darkneſs and horrid ſilence reign, except when broken by the echo of his groans; where months, and years, have been languiſh'd out in want of all that nature requires; an outcaſt from family, from friends, from eaſe and affluence, and

and a pleaſant habitation, from the bleſſed light of the world. He kneels; he weeps; he begs for pity. He ſues for mercy by the love of God, and by the bowels of humanity. Already cruelly exerciſed by torture, nature ſhudders at the thought of repeating the dreadful ſufferings, under which ſhe had almoſt ſunk before. He proteſts his innocence. He calls Heaven to witneſs for him; and implores the Divine power to touch the flinty heart, which all his cries and tears cannot move. The unfeeling monſter talks of hereſy, and profanation of his curſed ſuperſtition. His furious zeal for prieſtly power, and a worldly church, ſtops his ear againſt the melting voice of a fellow-creature proſtrate at his feet. And the terror neceſſary to be kept up among the blinded votaries, renders cruelty a proper inſtrument of religious ſlavery. The dumb executioners ſtrip him of his rags. The rack is prepared. The ropes are extended. The wheels are driven round. The bloody whip and hiſſing pincers tear the quivering fleſh from the bones. The pullies raiſe him to the roof. The ſinews crack. The joints are torn aſunder. The pavement ſwims in blood. The hardened miniſter of infernal cruelty ſits unmov'd. His heart has long been ſteel'd againſt compaſſion. He liſtens to the groans, he views the ſtrong convulſive pangs, when nature ſhrinks, and ſtruggles, and agoniſing pain rages in every pore. He counts the

heart-rending ſhrieks of a fellow-creature in torment, and enjoys his anguiſh with the calmneſs of one who views a philoſophical experiment. The wretched victim expires before him. He feels no movement, but of vexation at being deprived of his prey, before he had ſufficiently glutted his helliſh fury. He riſes. No thunder roars. No lightning blaſts him. He goes on to fill up the meaſure of his wickedneſs. He lives out his days in eaſe and luxury. He goes down to the grave gorged with the blood of the innocent; nor does the earth caſt up again his curſed carcaſe.

Can any one think ſuch ſcenes would be ſuffered to be acted in a world, at the head of which ſits enthron'd in ſupreme majeſty a Being of infinite goodneſs, and perfect juſtice, who has only to give his word, and ſuch monſters would be in an inſtant driven by his thunder to the centre; can any one think that ſuch proceedings would be ſuffered to paſs unpuniſhed, if there was not a life to come, a day appointed for rewarding every man according to his works?

Some have thought, that part of the arguments for the immortality of the human ſoul, being applicable to inferior natures, might be ſaid to prove too much, and therefore to prove nothing. For that the unequal allotment of happineſs and miſery among brute creatures ſeems to require that thoſe, who have ſuffered unjuſtly

in this ſtate, ſhould have ſuch ſufferings compenſated to them in ſome future exiſtence.

This difficulty is eaſily got over, if we conſider, firſt, that the ſufferings of the inferior creation are, ſo to ſpeak, only momentary; whereas fore-boding fears, and cutting reflexions, encreaſe human miſeries a thouſand-fold; which greatly abates the neceſſity of a future exiſtence to make up for what they may have ſuffered here. Beſides, juſtice does not require, that any ſpecies of creatures be wholly exempted from ſuffering; but only, that, upon the whole, all creatures have it in their power to be gainers by their exiſtence, that is, that they have in their power a greater ſhare of happineſs than miſery. If any one thinks it moſt probable, that all creatures, once introduced into exiſtence, are to be continued in being, till they deſerve, by perverſe wickedneſs, to be annihilated; and that, as material ſubſtances, which ſeem to us to periſh, are only diſſipated into ſmall inviſible parts, ſo the ſpirits of all living creatures, at death, are only removed into another ſtate; if any one, I ſay, thinks he ſees reaſon to believe the immortality, in a ſucceſſion of ſtates, of all living creatures, I do not ſee, that my ſubject obliges me to confute ſuch an opinion.

Though the diſtinguiſhing character of man is reaſon, it is evident, that reaſon does not in general prevail in the preſent ſtate; but on the

contrary vice and folly and madneſs ſeem to be moſt of what this world was made for, if it be the whole of man. And ſurely, ſuch an oeconomy is not worthy to be aſcribed to an infinitely wiſe Creator. Is it a deſign worthy of infinite goodneſs to produce into being a ſpecies to be continued for ſeveral thouſand years, to harraſs and maſſacre one another, and then to ſink again into the earth, and fatten it with their carcaſes? The Creator can never be ſuppoſed to have produced beings on purpoſe for ſuffering, and to be loſers by their exiſtence, without any fault of their own. Upon this foot, the brute creatures would have eminently the advantage of our ſpecies. But it is very improbable, that the beneficent author of nature has taken more care, and made a better proviſion for the inferior creatures, than for us. And ſtill more unlikely, that he has given the advantage upon the whole to the moſt worthleſs part of our ſpecies, and expoſed the beſt of mankind to unavoidable diſtreſs and hardſhip, as is conſpicuouſly the caſe in innumerable inſtances in this world. For in the caſe of tyranny and perſecution, it is evident, that all that the good man has to ſupport him under his cruel ſufferings, is the teſtimony of his conſcience; the perſuaſion of the Divine approbation; and the hope of a future recompence of honour and happineſs for the pain and ſhame he has ſuffered here. But, to ſay, there is no future ſtate of retribution, is to ſay, That He, who placed conſcience

conſcience in the human breaſt, did ſo for the ſole purpoſe of making the beſt of men the moſt unhappy; that He, who moſt loves, and beſt knows the ſincere and upright, will ſhew no favour to the ſincere and upright, but the contrary; and conſequently, that virtue is ſomething worſe than an empty name, being a real and ſubſtantial misfortune to its moſt faithful votary. To ſay the truth, were the preſent ſtate the whole of the human exiſtence, it is evident, that to give up life for the cauſe of religion, ſo far from being virtue, the higheſt pitch of virtue, would be directly vicious; becauſe it would be throwing away our exiſtence for an abſolute nothing. Annihilate the reality of a future ſtate; and Chriſtianity is a deluſion; conſequently not to be ſuffered for.

There is, there muſt be, hereafter a ſtate, in which the preſent irregularities ſhall be rectified; and defects ſupplied; in which vice and folly ſhall univerſally, by eſtabliſhed laws of the Divine oeconomy, ſink to diſgrace and puniſhment, and wiſdom and virtue of-courſe riſe univerſally triumphant, and prevail throughout the univerſe. For it cannot be but that what is ſuitable to the character of the univerſal Governor, ſhould have the advantage, upon the whole, in a world, of which he is the abſolute and irreſiſtible Lord, and that what oppoſes perfect rectitude armed with omnipotence, muſt ſooner or later be cruſhed before him. For he does in the armies of heaven,

and

and among the inhabitants of the earth, whatever ſeems to him good, and none can ſtay his hand.

The virtuous and pious ſoul has, above all, ſuch evidence for its own immortality, as it cannot doubt. Purified from every ſordid deſire, purged from every dreg of earth, and become wholly ſpiritual and angelic; whoſe proſpects are large, whoſe views ſublime, and whoſe diſpoſition godlike; ſuch a ſoul already feels her own immortality. Whilſt in the body, ſhe is ſenſible of her own independence upon the body, and ſuperiority to it. While chained to fleſh, and impriſoned in clay, ſhe feels within herſelf celeſtial vigor, declaring her nobler origin. Attracted by the Divine influence, which in degenerate ſpirits is clogged and overpowered by ſenſual appetite and ſordid paſſion, ſhe raiſes her deſires to that better world, for which ſhe was formed. She pants for liberty; ſhe breathes after that ſtate of heavenly light and real life, which ſuits her noble powers, and elevated diſpoſition; ſhe ſpreads her impatient wing; ſhe plumes herſelf for flight; ſhe darts her angelic eye as it were athwart eternity; her vaſt imagination already graſps futurity; ſhe leaves behind, in thought, this leſſening ſpeck of matter, and all its vanities; ſhe hangs upon the verge of time, and only waits the powerful call, which ſpoke her into being, to ſeize the future world, the glories of the reſurrection, to leave theſe lower regions, and expatiate at large

large through boundleſs ſpace, to view the immenſity of nature, and to ſoar with choirs of ſeraphim, to preſent herſelf before the eternal throne.

SECT. IV.

Reaſonableneſs and Neceſſity of the Connexion between the Behaviour of moral Agents and their Happineſs. Diſcipline the only means for bringing moral Agents voluntarily to purſue Virtue.

HAVING already ſeen, that it was neceſſary to the very idea of a perfect ſyſtem, that there ſhould be a proper ſubordination, a ſcale, riſing by eaſy and juſt degrees, of the various ranks of creatures; it is evident, that there muſt have been ſuch a creature as man, that is, a ſpecies to fill the place which he poſſeſſes. And it is plain, that as his place is immediately above the brute, and below the angelic nature, he could not poſſibly have been formed otherwiſe than he is. He could not be ſuperior to the animal rank, without having powers and faculties ſuperior to theirs. It is that which gives him his ſuperiority over them. Nor could he have been inferior to the angelic order of beings, without falling ſhort of their powers and faculties. It is the very thing which places him beneath them. Man, or whatever creature ſhould have been made to fill up the chaſm between the angelic and the animal natures, muſt have been exactly

exactly what we find our ſpecies actually is. For without ſuch a rank as man, the moral ſyſtem could not have been perfect, conſequently could not have been at all: for it is impoſſible, that an abſolutely perfect Author ſhould produce an imperfect work. So that there is no room left to complain, that by creating man in ſuch a ſtation it was neceſſary he ſhould be endowed with nobler powers and faculties than the brutes, he comes to be put in a more elevated and more precarious ſtate. It it true, that very few of the brutes are likely to fall ſhort of the happineſs deſtined for them, having, as already obſerved, but few chances of miſſing of it, and being more effectually confined to the track appointed them, than it was proper ſuch a creature as man ſhould be. But is not the immenſe ſuperiority of happineſs to which a human mind may, with proper attention, riſe, a very great over-balance for all the diſadvantages our ſpecies labours under, were there a thouſand for one? Would any man, who had his choice before-hand, whether he would be of the human or the brute ſpecies, deliberately chooſe the latter, in which he knew it was impoſſible he ſhould ever attain any conſiderable degree of perfection and happineſs, rather than the former, in which he was ſure, if he was not wanting to himſelf, he might riſe to greatneſs and felicity inconceivable? Would any rational creature make this abſurd choice merely upon the conſideration, that if he was of a ſpecies endowed with

with liberty, it was poſſible he might be ſo fooliſh as to neglect his own intereſt, and with open eyes run into ruin and miſery? What no reaſonable being would chooſe, let not preſumptuous man blame his Maker for not putting in his choice. If man is what he ought to be, and is placed where he ought to be, what has he to do, but to think of filling his ſtation with ſuch propriety as is neceſſary for a reaſonable being to ſtudy, who is deſirous of attaining his own perfection and happineſs in the only way in which they are attainable?

If the perfect concurrence of reaſonable beings, as well as others, with the Divine ſcheme, was neceſſary to the very notion of a regular univerſal ſyſtem, with an univerſal Governor at the head of it; it was to be expected, that the final happineſs of ſuch beings as ſhould ſtudy to conform themſelves habitually in diſpoſition and practice to the Divine ſcheme, ſhould by the poſitive ordination of the Ruler of the world be cloſely connected with their character and behaviour. And if it be impoſſible to conceive a plan of univerſal oeconomy laid by an univerſal and perfect mind, that ſhould not be ſuitable to his own neceſſary nature and character, but founded in mere arbitrary will; it is likewiſe impoſſible to conceive a ſyſtem in which the habitual conformity of reaſonable beings to the grand ſcheme of the univerſal Governor ſhould not naturally, and as it were of itſelf, produce happineſs. The Divine

ſcheme

ſcheme of government is founded, not in arbitrary will; but in the eternal and unchangeable rectitude of the Divine nature. And therefore it was as much an impoſſibility that it ſhould be contrary to what it is, or that conformity to it ſhould finally produce any thing but happineſs, or irregularity any thing but miſery; as that the Divine nature, which is neceſſarily what it is, ſhould have been otherwiſe. So that, till the time comes, when univerſal regularity ſhall have the ſame natural tendency to promote order, perfection, and happineſs, as univerſal conformity to the ſcheme of the univerſe; when the Divine will comes to be directly contrary to all the moral perfections of his nature, till impoſſibilities become poſſible, and direct contradictions the ſame; till the time comes, when all theſe ſhall happen, there can be no chance for the happineſs of any reaſoning being, who does not ſtudy to conform his diſpoſition and practice to the general ſcheme of the Ruler of the world.

Let daring impious man hear this and tremble.

That there is a rectitude in conduct, which is independent upon any connected happineſs, ſeems ſo evident, that one would wonder how ſome writers have perſuaded themſelves, and laboured to perſuade others, That the only good, or rectitude of an action, is its tendency to produce happineſs. After what I have ſaid to ſhew the natural, as well as judicial connexion between virtue and happineſs, I muſt declare, that to me it appears evident,

evident, That rectitude is prior to, and independent upon, all tendency to produce happineſs. To prove this very briefly, let it be propoſed to a perſon, that he have his choice to perform ſome noble action, ſuch as delivering his country, by one of two methods, the former of which ſhall oblige him to make uſe of a piece of diſſimulation, which ſhall hurt no creature, but if he chooſes the latter, he may ſave his country without the leaſt deviation from truth. Ought a man of integrity to heſitate one moment which of the two methods he would chooſe? And does not the preference of the latter to the former, the conſequences of both being the ſame, ſhew plainly a rectitude in mere veracity, independent of its producing happineſs? Again, were a traveller to ſee ſome ſtrange ſight, which never had been, or could be ſeen, by any other, would it not be evidently better that he gave an account of it on his return, exactly in every circumſtance as it really was, than that he ſhould in the ſmalleſt circumſtance deviate from truth; though ſuch deviation ſhould have no kind of effect upon any perſon in the world? Farther, is it not certain, beyond all poſſibility of doubt, that the Supreme Being acts always from the greateſt and beſt motives, and according to the wiſeſt and moſt perfect rules, at the ſame time that his happineſs is, has been, and will be, neceſſarily, at all moments, from eternity to eternity, the ſame, unchangeable, and abſolutely perfect. Is the whole rectitude of created

created beings the purſuit of happineſs? And is there no foundation for Divine rectitude? Is it not rectitude in a prince, or a father, to wiſh the happineſs of his people, or children, without regard to his own happineſs? Is not benevolence the more truly commendable for its being diſintereſted? Whereas, upon the ſcheme of placing the whole of rectitude in purſuing the greateſt happineſs, it ought to be quite the reverſe. Ought not a good man to do what is right, rather than the contrary, if he were ſure, that himſelf and the whole univerſe were to be annihilated the next moment, ſo that it would be impoſſible that any degree of happineſs ſhould be the conſequence?

There is plainly an independent rectitude, or goodneſs, in the conduct of moral agents, ſeparate from the connexion between virtue and happineſs. And this is the foundation of the neceſſity of their acting according to a certain fixed courſe; and conſequently of their having laws and rules promulgated to them by the univerſal Governor. Nor does this at all invalidate the connexion between virtue and happineſs; but on the contrary, ſhews that there is, and ought to be, ſuch a connexion. And, generally ſpeaking, there is no ſafer way to try the moral excellence or turpitude of actions, than by conſidering the natural conſequences of their being univerſally practiſed. For example, let it be ſuppoſed a queſtionable point, Whether the murder of the innocent

innocent is in itſelf right, or otherwiſe. Try it by the conſequences, which muſt follow the univerſal practice of deſtroying all the good and virtuous part of mankind; and it immediately appears to be ſo far from right, that nothing can be conceived more contrary to rectitude. On the other hand, let it be diſputed, Whether the protection and preſervation of the innocent be right. Let it be conſidered, what would be the conſequences of innocence's being univerſally preſerved and protected; and it appears evident beyond all poſſibility of doubt, that nothing is more agreeable to rectitude. Rectitude, therefore, does not conſiſt in the purſuit of happineſs; nor does the happineſs, conſequent upon a certain courſe of conduct, conſtitute the rectitude of ſuch conduct. The true ſtate of the caſe is, Certain actions are firſt in themſelves right, and then happineſs is the natural and judicial conſequence of them.

In order to bring mankind to a complete and perfect concurrence with the univerſal ſcheme, it was plainly neceſſary, that other means ſhould be uſed than force, or inſtinct, the firſt of which was ſufficient for working dead matter, and the ſecond, the animal creation, to the Divine purpoſe. Had man been only inanimate matter, nothing more would have been neceſſary, than that he ſhould be acted upon. Had he been a machine; a weight, or a ſpring, would have been ſufficient to make him perform his motions. Were there nothing in man but the mere animal

powers, were he capable of being wrought to nothing higher than the animal functions, were his nature fit for no higher happineſs, than thoſe of eating and drinking, and, after living a few years, and leaving behind him a ſucceſſor to fill his place, and continue the ſpecies, to paſs out of exiſtence; were this the caſe, there would have needed no very grand apparatus to make him fill his inconſiderable place, ſo as to contribute his ſmall ſhare to the happineſs of the whole, and to ſecure his own mean portion. But it is very much otherwiſe, as will immediately appear. I believe hardly any one will deny, that man (or however moſt of the ſpecies) are endowed with the faculty of underſtanding; by which, though weak indeed and narrow at preſent, our ſpecies are yet capable of diſtinguiſhing truth from falſhood, in all points of importance, and with ſufficient certainty, as ſhewn above. Now, in order to a creature's acting properly its part, and concurring with the whole, it is evidently neceſſary, that it make a proper uſe and application of every one of its faculties. No one will pretend, I think, that the perfection and happineſs of the univerſe would be as univerſally promoted by every individual's making a wrong uſe of his faculties, as a right one; but on the contrary, that every individual's making an improper uſe of his faculties would produce the moſt conſummate diſorder and imperfection in the ſyſtem, and would be the moſt oppoſite to the

the Divine ſcheme, that could be imagined. It follows, that, if man is endowed with underſtanding, he is to be brought to cultivate and inform it, not to ſtifle and blind it; to endeavour to enlarge, not to narrow it; to apply it to the ſearching out of uſeful and important truth, not to miſlead it into the belief of falſhoods, nor to employ it upon objects unworthy of it.

Another leading faculty in the human mind is will. That there is in man a faculty of will, or a power of chooſing and refuſing, we ſhall ſee eſtabliſhed immediately. What I have to ſay at preſent is, That in order to man's concurrence with the univerſal ſcheme, it is neceſſary, that he regulate his will properly, or in ſuch a manner, that he may will or deſire whatever is for the general good, and will or deſire nothing that may be generally prejudicial. No man, I think, will pretend, that it would be better if the wills of all created beings were ſet to thwart the general ſcheme, than that they were formed to concur with it; but, on the contrary, it is evident, that a general oppoſition of all beings to what is the nature of things, and the right upon the whole, muſt produce univerſal confuſion, and that if there was no way to bring about this general concurrence, it were reaſonable to expect, from the abſolutely perfect rectitude of the ſupreme Governor of the world, that an univerſe of ſuch perverſe and unruly beings ſhould be utterly deſtroyed, or rather never have been produced. It is

plain, then, that, in order to man's acting his part, and concurring with the general ſcheme, he muſt be brought to uſe all the faculties of his mind properly.

I promiſed above to bring ſome proofs for the fact of man's being a creature endowed with will, or freedom to deſire, and power to determine himſelf in favour of, or againſt any particular object. The certainty of this fact is founded in ſenſation, and confirmed by reaſoning. Let any man obſerve what paſſes in his own mind, and he will be obliged to own, that he feels he has it in his power to will, or deſire, and determine himſelf in favour of, or againſt any particular object. We have no other proof for our exiſtence, nor is it in its nature capable of any other, than that we feel we exiſt.

But becauſe the reality of human liberty has been cavilled at by ſome men of metaphyſical heads, who have run into greater difficulties to avoid leſs, it may be worth while to conſider this matter a little. I know not whether I am made like the reſt of mankind. But I can feel every thing paſs in my mind, that I can conceive I ſhould feel, if I was really a free agent. For example, in an indifferent caſe: When I look on my watch, to know whether it is time for me to give over writing, and I find the hour come, when I uſually give over, I do not find that I am impelled to lay down my pen, in the ſame manner as the index of my watch is moved to point

at

at the hour; but that I give over, becauſe I think, upon the whole, it is more proper, I ſhould give over, than go on. Does my watch point to the hour, becauſe it thinks upon the whole, it is more proper that it ſhould point to that hour than any other? If ſo, then the watch and I are beings of the ſame ſort, endowed with much the ſame powers and faculties. Do I not lay aſide my pen, becauſe I chooſe to lay it aſide, that is, becauſe I am willing to lay it aſide? Should I give over, if I was unwilling to give over? If I find my uſual time paſt, and yet ſhould be glad to finiſh the head I am upon, before I lay aſide my pen, does that motive act upon me, and force me to go on, as a ſpring acts upon a watch, or does it act as a conſideration upon a rational creature?

Again, ſuppoſe I am tempted to do a bad action, do the motives laid in my way force my compliance? Do I not, on the contrary, feel that I yield to them, becauſe I chooſe to ſeize a preſent object, which I expect to yield me ſome fancied advantage? Do I not feel in my own mind a violent ſtruggle between the conſiderations of preſent profit or pleaſure, and thoſe of wiſdom and virtue? Is it poſſible I ſhould feel any ſuch ſtruggle if I was not free? Does any ſuch thing paſs in a machine? Do I not find, that I ſometimes yield to temptations, which at other times I get the better of? Have not others reſiſted temptations which have proved too hard for me? Could theſe differences happen, if they and I

were machines? Do not theſe inſtances of temptations conquered, fix both liberty and guilt upon me, in having yielded to what it was plain I might have reſiſted at one time, if I did at another? If it is extremely difficult, or what may be called next to impoſſible, to reſiſt all ſorts of temptations at all times, does this prove any thing elſe, than that human nature is weak? Were man a machine, he muſt act as a machine, uniformly and invariably.

What I have here remarked upon the caſe of being tempted to a bad action, is applicable, *mutatis mutandis*, to that of an opportunity of doing a good one. Motives, according as they appear, will influence a rational mind. But the appearance of motives to our minds, as well as their influence over us, depends very much upon ourſelves. If I am prevailed on by motives, do motives force me? Do I not yield to them, becauſe I chooſe to yield to them? If this is not being free, what is freedom? What ſhould I feel paſs in my mind, if I was really free? What may we ſuppoſe ſuperior beings, what may we ſuppoſe the Supreme himſelf to feel in his infinite mind? Does he (with profound reverence be it ſpoken) does he act without regard to motives? Does he act contrary to reaſonable motives? Can we ſuppoſe him uninfluenced by proper motives? Can we ſuppoſe he feels himſelf to be wholly uninfluenced by reaſonable and important conſiderations? Would we be more free than the moſt perfect of all beings? If he gives us liberty and power

power to a proper extent, what would we have more? If we feel that we have ſuch liberty, why ſhould we, contrary to poſſibility, endeavour to bring ourſelves to doubt of our having it? If we cannot doubt of our being free creatures, what have we more to think of, than how to make a proper uſe of our liberty, how to get our wills formed to a perfect concurrence with the grand ſcheme of the Governor of the univerſe, ſo that we may behave properly within our ſphere, which if we and all other moral agents did, every part muſt be properly acted, every ſphere properly filled, and univerſal regularity, perfection, and happineſs be the reſult.

Some have imagined that allowing liberty or will to created beings was a derogation from the Supreme, to whom alone the privilege of freedom ought to be aſcribed. It is certain that this is ſtrictly true of abſolute, independent, original freedom. As it is undoubted that independent, neceſſary, or natural exiſtence is the incommunicable privilege of the Firſt cauſe. But, as we find a limited, dependent exiſtence may be, and actually is, communicated to created beings, where is the difficulty or impropriety of ſuppoſing a limited, independent freedom, or power of chooſing or refuſing, communicated to created beings. As created beings depend on the Supreme for their exiſtence, and yet the exiſtence they enjoy is a real and proper exiſtence; ſo may the liberty they enjoy, of chooſing or refuſing, be a real and proper liberty, and yet derived from, and dependent on the infinite Giver of every gift.

If there is no ſuch thing as liberty, in any created being, as ſome have imagined, then it is evident, there can be no will but that of the Supreme Being: for liberty, or a power of chooſing or refuſing, is only another term for will. Will, or willingneſs, implies freedom in the very term. Therefore, the common term free-will is a tautology, as much as if one ſhould ſay voluntary will. There neither is, nor can be, any will but free will. Conſtraint, or force, is the very oppoſite of will, or willingneſs. Let it be conſidered then, what the conſequence muſt be of affirming that there is no will, but the Supreme. We find in hiſtory, that a monſter of an emperor wiſhed that the whole *Roman* people had but one neck, that he might cut them all off at once. The ſame temper, which led him to deſire the deſtruction of his people, of whom he ought to have been the father and protector, would have inclined him to wiſh the deſtruction of whatever oppoſed him, that is, of all good beings in heaven and earth. Will any one pretend, that this temper of mind is agreeable to the Supreme will? Is it not blaſphemy to imagine the Divine will to be againſt goodneſs? But if liberty or will in a created being is impoſſible, then what we call *Caligula's* will was really the Divine will; the deſtruction of all goodneſs was agreeable to the Divine mind! It is too horrible to think of.

I know, it has been ſaid, that the perpetration of the moſt wicked action, that ever was committed,

mitted, muſt have been in one ſenſe ſuitable to the Divine mind, and ſcheme, elſe it would have been prevented by his over-ruling power. In a ſtate of diſcipline, it was neceſſary, that both the good and the wicked ſhould have liberty, within a certain ſphere, to exert themſelves according to their reſpective characters; and the Divine wiſdom has taken meaſures for preventing ſuch a prevalence of wickedneſs as ſhould defeat his gracious ends; ſo that it ſhall ſtill be worth while to have created an univerſe; though every thing would have gone incomparably better, had no moral agent ever made a wrong uſe of his liberty. Nor is there the leaſt difficulty in conceiving of the Supreme Being, as propoſing the greateſt poſſible happineſs of his creatures, and of a wicked being, as Satan, as ſtudying how to produce the greateſt miſery. Which two inclinations, if they be not direct oppoſites, there is no ſuch thing as oppoſition conceivable. And if there is a will oppoſite to the Divine, there is freedom; for freedom is neceſſary to the idea of will.

It being then evident beyond contradiction, that man is endowed with liberty, or a power of chooſing to act in ſuch or ſuch a manner, within the ſphere appointed him by his Maker, it follows, that to bring him to act his part properly, or in ſuch a manner as may the moſt conduce to the order, perfection, and happineſs of the whole, ſuch means muſt be uſed as are fit to work upon an intelligent free agent. Neither force, nor

mere inſtinct, being ſuited to a creature of ſuperior rank, fit to be acted upon by reaſonable motives, it is plain, that nothing is ſo proper to lead mankind to a ſteddy and habitual attachment to rectitude of conduct, as placing them in a ſtate of diſcipline.

We find by experience, that we ourſelves (and perhaps it may be the caſe of all orders of rational created beings in the univerſe) are not of ourſelves at firſt ſtrongly attached to any object, but what we are led to by inſtinct or conſtitution, in which there is nothing either praiſe-worthy or blameable. Some minds are indeed obſerved to be very well or ill diſpoſed, ſo to ſpeak, in early youth. But the goodneſs of very young perſons is generally rather negative, conſiſting in a temper fit for virtue, a ſoil proper to ſow the good ſeed in, and free from any unhappy caſt of diſpoſition. As on the contrary, thoſe we call unpromiſing children, are unfortunate through ſome deficiency or redundancy, moſt probably in the material frame, which proves unfriendly to the cultivation of virtue in the mind, which would otherwiſe ſpring up, and thrive in it, almoſt of itſelf. For virtue wants only to be ſeen by an unprejudiced mind, to be loved. But the proper notion of goodneſs in a moral agent, is a ſtrong and habitual inclination in the mind, to concur with the Divine ſcheme, or to act on all occaſions according to rectitude, ariſing not from irreſiſtible, mechanical inſtinct, nor from mere negative

negative happineſs of conſtitution; but from clear and comprehenſive views of the nature of things, and of moral obligations. In this there is a real and intrinſic excellence. And were this attachment to rectitude, on rational conſiderations, univerſally prevalent in all moral agents; moral evil there could be none. How the moſt effectually to produce and fix in the minds of free agents this inviolable attachment to virtue, is therefore the point to be gained.

The Supreme Mind perceiving all things as they really are, and having all things abſolutely in his power, can in no reſpect be biaſſed againſt perfect rectitude; but muſt be more inviolably attached to it, ſo to ſpeak, than any finite being, whoſe views muſt be comparatively narrow. And to ſpeak properly, he is himſelf the baſis and ſtandard of rectitude. The mind of an angel, or archangel, muſt, in proportion to the extent of his views of things, be more ſtrongly attached to rectitude, than that of any mortal in the preſent ſtate. Yet we have no reaſon to imagine that ſuch his attachment was congenial to him; but may rather conclude it to be the effect of examination, habit, and gradual improvement. We cannot conceive of a mind juſt produced into exiſtence, as furniſhed with inclinations, attachments, or even ideas of any kind. We have no conception of theſe as other than the effects of improvement. And we conſider a mind at its firſt entrance into being, as endowed only with

with the capacity of taking in ideas, as the eye is of viewing objects, when preſented to it. So that we can form no other notion of the elevated degree of goodneſs, which thoſe glorious beings have attained, than as the effect of their having paſſed a very long courſe of improvement. Nor do the accounts we have in revelation, of the fall of ſome of them ſeem ſo well to ſuit any other ſcheme, as that of their having been at that time in a ſtate of diſcipline analogous to ours. Be that as it will, it is evident, that to ſuch creatures as we are, with capacities and all other circumſtances ſuch as ours (and had they been different, we ſhould not have been what we are, nor where we are) nothing but a ſtate of diſcipline could have anſwered the end of producing in us the neceſſary attachment to rectitude or virtue. For this attachment or inclination could not have ariſen in us of itſelf, and without adequate means.

SECT. V.

*The preſent very proper for a State of Diſcipline *. Objections anſwered.*

WERE we to imagine a plan of a ſtate of diſcipline, for improving a ſpecies of beings ſuch as ours for high ſtations, and extenſive uſeful-

* The Author would not, if it were to do again, draw up the following Section, altogether as it ſtands here, ſeeing, as he thinks, reaſon to change his opinion, in ſome points (none of them indeed of any material conſequence) from what it was, when this book was written.

neſs

neſs in future ſtates; how could we ſuppoſe it contrived in any manner, that ſhould be materially different from the ſtate we find ourſelves in? What ſcheme could be imagined, likely to anſwer the purpoſes of planting in the mind of the creature the neceſſary habit of obedience to the Supreme Being; of giving it an inviolable attachment to virtue, and horror at irregularity; and of teaching it to ſtudy a rational and voluntary concurrence with the general ſcheme of the Governor of the univerſe; what method, I ſay, can we conceive of for theſe noble purpoſes, that ſhould not take in, among others, the following particulars, viz. That the ſpecies ſhould be furniſhed with ſufficient capacity, and advantages of all kinds, for diſtinguiſhing between right and wrong: That the ingenuity of their diſpoſitions, and the ſtrength of their virtue, ſhould have full exerciſe, in order both to its trial, and its improvement: That they ſhould have rewards and puniſhments ſet before them, as the moſt powerful motives to obedience: And that, upon the whole, they ſhould have it fairly in their power to attain the end of their being put in a ſtate of diſcipline?

If we conſider the preſent as a ſtate of diſcipline, all is ordered as it ſhould be. We enter into life with minds wholly unfurniſhed with ideas, attachments, or biaſſes of any kind. After a little time, we find certain inſtincts begin to act pretty ſtrongly within us, which are neceſſary to move us to avoid what might be hurtful, and purſue

purſue what is uſeful to the ſupport of the animal frame; and theſe inſtincts are appointed to anticipate reaſon, which does not at firſt exert itſelf; and bring us to that by mechanical means, which we are not capable of being worked to by rational conſiderations. Nature has ordered, that our parents ſhall be ſo engaged to us by irreſiſtible affection, as to be willing to undertake the office of caring for us in our helpleſs years; of opening, and cultivating our reaſon, as ſoon as it begins to appear; and of forming us by habit, by precept, and example, to virtue and regularity. As we advance in life, our faculties, by habitually exerting them upon various objects, come to enlarge themſelves, ſo as to take in a wider compaſs. We become then capable of reaſoning upon actions, and their conſequences, and accordingly do, in general, reaſon juſtly enough about matters of right and wrong, where paſſion does not blind and miſlead us. When we come into the vigorous and flouriſhing time of life, excited by our paſſions and appetites, without which, with the low degree of reaſon we then enjoy, we ſhould be but half animated, we proceed to enter into various ſcenes of action. It is true, that innumerable irregularities and follies are the conſequence. But without paſſions and appetites, we could not be the compounded creatures we are, nor conſequently fill our proper ſtation between the angelic and animal ranks. Here then is the proper opportunity for exerciſing our virtue;

tue; for habituating us to keep continually on our guard againſt innumerable aſſaults; for watching over ourſelves, that we may not be ſurprized, and fall before temptation; or if we fall, that by ſuffering from our errors, we may be moved to greater diligence and attention to our duty, to a ſtronger attachment to virtue, and a more fixed hatred to the crimes which have brought ſuch ſufferings upon us. And though the neceſſary propenſions of our nature do indeed eventually lead us, through our own folly, into irregularity and vice, it muſt yet be owned at the ſame time, that by the wiſe and kind conſtitution of nature, we have innumerable natural directions, and advantages, toward reſtraining and bringing them under ſubjection, and innumerable ill conſequences are made to follow naturally upon our giving a looſe to them. Which ought in all reaſon to lead us to reflect, that the government of our paſſions and appetites is a part of our wiſdom and our duty.

Pleaſure and pain, health and diſeaſe, ſucceſs and misfortune, reward and puniſhment, often at a very great diſtance of time after the action, are made the natural, or at leaſt frequent conſequences of our general behaviour here; to ſuggeſt to us the reaſonableneſs of concluding that an extenſive uniformity prevails through the whole of the Divine moral government, and that what we ſee here in ſhadow, will in the future ſtate appear in ſubſtance and perfection, and that it not only

only will, but ought, to be ſo, and cannot be otherwiſe.

If we conſider the oppoſite natural tendencies and effects of virtue and vice, in the preſent ſtate, we ſhall from thence ſee reaſon to conclude, that the former is pleaſing to the Governor of the world, and the latter the contrary. The natural effects of temperance are health, length of days, and a more delicate enjoyment of the innocent pleaſures of life. The natural effects of gluttony, drunkenneſs, and lewdneſs are diſeaſe and pain, diſguſt and diſappointment, and untimely death. The natural effects of univerſal benevolence, juſtice, and charity, are the love of mankind, ſucceſs in life, and peace in one's own mind. The conſequences to be expected from ill-will, injuſtice, and ſelfiſhneſs, are the contempt and hatred of mankind, and puniſhment by the laws of nations. When we ſay ſuch an effect follows naturally from ſuch a cauſe, we mean, that it does ſo by the Divine appointment. For what is natural, is only ſo, becauſe rectitude requires it to be ſo.

Now, if our bodily frame is ſo formed that its well-being conſiſts in temperance, and that an immoderate indulgence of appetite tends to diſorder and unhinge it; if the make of the human mind, and our ſocial ſtate in life, are ſuch, that the ſocial virtues tend to produce univerſal happineſs, and all this by the conſtitution and courſe of nature, of which God himſelf is the Author; if theſe things be ſo, who is ſo blind, as not to

ſee in all this a moral government already eſtabliſhed under God, even in this world, and going on to perfection? That we ſee in fact innumerable deviations from the natural connexion between virtue and happineſs, and vice and miſery; and that, through the perverſeneſs, the wickedneſs, and ſometimes the mere caprice of mankind, and the unnatural and diſorderly ſtate things are got into, it comes to paſs, that the natural conſequences of things do not invariably follow, is by no means an objection againſt the concluſion I have drawn from the ſtate of things, as the Divine wiſdom conſtituted them, any more than the poſſibility of reſiſting the power of gravitation, or lifting a heavy body, is a proof, that there is no ſuch law eſtabliſhed in the natural world by the Author of nature.

That we may not, by a continued courſe of eaſe and happineſs, be led either to ſuch arrogance and pride, as to conclude ourſelves the lords of nature, and to forget that there is One above us; or to fix our affections upon the preſent ſtate, which is only intended to be tranſient and temporary, not laſting and final; to anſwer theſe important ends, we are placed in the ſchool of affliction, to be broke and tamed to obedience. That happineſs too eaſily come at, and a conſtant ſeries of ſucceſs and proſperity, are by no means proper for ſuch unprincipled and unexperienced beings as we are, is too evident from the effects of eaſe and affluence, which very few can bear

without almoſt loſing their reaſon. The ſcenes of madneſs run into by victorious princes, of which hiſtory is full; the pranks from time to time plaid by our nobility, and rich commoners, and the fate of whole nations, whenever they arrive at the pinnacle of greatneſs and riches, ſhew the abſolute neceſſity of affliction to force us upon conſideration, to put us in mind of the frailty of our nature and ſtate, and to make us remember that we are under the government of One, who can raiſe or humble, afflict or relieve, reward or puniſh, as to him ſeems good.

That we may never loſe ſight of our duty, nor have it in our power to pretend ignorance; and to ſilence even the poor excuſe of thoughtleſſneſs, conſcience, that ever-watchful and faithful monitor, is placed within the mind itſelf, to be always at hand, to judge of our characters and actions, and to alarm us with its ſtings and reproaches, whenever we do amiſs. And there is no mind ſo groſs and ſtupid, as not to feel at times ſome pangs of remorſe. The very Cannibal has a clear enough ſenſe of right and wrong, to know when he himſelf is injured, though he will not ſtick to injure his neighbour. This effectually faſtens guilt upon him. And the loweſt and moſt ſavage of mankind, who ſhall hereafter be condemned, will be obliged to own, that with all his diſadvantages for knowing his duty, he might have acted his part better than he did.

Not

Not only conſcience within, but every object in nature preſents us ſome moral leſſon. Tempeſts, thunders, and lightnings, from above, inundations and earthquakes from beneath; the ſword, famine, and peſtilence, in our cities; diſeaſes, and pains, in our own perſons, or thoſe of our neareſt friends and relations, and death on our right hand and on our left; what are all theſe, but awful and yet kind warnings from the tender and compaſſionate Father of mankind, who ſhews himſelf willing to give his poor unthinking, ſhort-ſighted creatures all poſſible advantages for virtue and happineſs, that might be at all conſiſtent with their nature as free agents, with their condition as beings in a ſtate of diſcipline, and with the grand and univerſal ſcheme, which muſt be equitable, unchangeable, and uniform.

And, as if all this, and a thouſand times more not mentioned, had not been enough, we are taught, that angels have a charge over us, to aſſiſt us in our trials, and to prevent our falling too ſhamefully; that the Divine providence watches over us, and ſuits our circumſtances to our ſtrength and ingenuity of diſpoſition. And to crown all, the Ambaſſador of heaven, the image of Paternal Deity, and brightneſs of Divine Glory has deſcended to our world, and in our own nature ſhewn us, both by his example and his divine laws, what it is to live as we ought, and how we may infallibly attain the end of our

being. If this is not doing enough for us, what would be enough?

Thus it appears plain, that the preſent was intended for a ſtate of diſcipline, and is very well adapted to that purpoſe. Nor does the actual failure and hideous ruin of numbers of moral agents, who will undoubtedly be found hereafter to have perverted this ſtate of diſcipline for virtue, into an education in vice, prove, that the ſtate was not intended for training them up to virtue, or that it is not properly adapted to that purpoſe, any more, than the amazing number of abortions, which happen in the natural world, proves, that the general deſign of ſeeds was not to fructify, and produce plants and animals. Naturaliſts ſhew us, that in ſome caſes, millions of ſtamina periſh, for one that comes to maturity. And, as we conclude every ſeed of a plant, or animal egg, was formed capable of fructification, ſo we may, that every moral agent was formed capable of attaining happineſs. The great difference is, that in the natural world, the numerous abortions we have been ſpeaking of, are the conſequence of the common courſe of nature; but in the moral, of the fatal perverſeneſs of unhappy beings, who willfully ruſh upon their own deſtruction.

Some have made a difficulty of conceiving how the wiſeſt and beſt of beings, who muſt have foreſeen, that great numbers of his unhappy, ſhort-ſighted creatures, in ſpite of all that ſhould be

be done for them, would obſtinately throw themſelves into deſtruction, and defeat the end of their creation; ſome have puzzled themſelves, I ſay, how to reconcile with the divine perfections of wiſdom and goodneſs, the creating of ſuch beings.

But what ſtate of diſcipline for free agents can be conceived, without ſuppoſing a poſſibility of their behaving ill in it? Nothing but an abſolute reſtraint upon the liberty of the creature, which is wholly inconſiſtent with the nature of free agency, and of a ſtate of diſcipline, could have prevented their acting in many inſtances amiſs. But the all-bounteous Creator has effectually put it out of the power of the moſt preſumptuouſly inſolent of his creatures to arraign his juſtice. For, if he has given to every accountable being a fair opportunity of working out his own happineſs; if he has put into the hands of every individual the means; placed him in the direct way toward it, and is ready to aſſiſt him in his endeavours after it; if he has, in ſhort, put happineſs in the power of every accountable being, which he undoubtedly has, as ſhewn above; he has, to all intents and purpoſes, done the ſame, as if he had given it to every individual. For he, who points me out the way to get an eſtate, or any of the good things of life, and who aſſiſts and ſupports me in my endeavours to procure it, he it is, to whom I am obliged for whatever I acquire in conſequence of his advice, and by means of his protection and aſſiſtance? Now, if

the beneficent Author of being has thus given to every individual ſuch means of happineſs, as it muſt be wholly through his own perverſeneſs, if he miſſes it; what ſhadow of pretence is there for cavilling, or what difficulty in underſtanding and vindicating the wiſdom and goodneſs of the adorable Author of exiſtence? If we lay the whole blame, and with the utmoſt juſtice, on him, who, having an opportunity and means for gaining any ſecular advantage, put in his hands, neglects them; if we ſhould as much condemn the man, who, through obſtinacy or indolence, has let ſlip an opportunity of making his fortune, as another, who through extravagance has diſſipated one already in his poſſeſſion; if we ſhould as juſtly look upon that perſon as our benefactor, by whoſe means we acquire the conveniencies of life, as on the immediate giver of a gift, what remains, but that we juſtify and adore the boundleſs goodneſs of the univerſal Parent of nature, who, by calling innumerable creatures into exiſtence, by endowing them with reaſon, by placing them in a ſtate of diſcipline, and giving them all poſſible advantages for the improvement neceſſary for happineſs, has, in effect, put in the hands of every accountable being a felicity fit for a God to beſtow? And if every individual, that ſhall hereafter be condemned, ſhall be obliged to confeſs his ſentence juſt, and to own, that he might have acted a better part than he did, the

divine

divine juſtice and goodneſs ſtand fully vindicated in the ſight of the whole rational creation.

For, what!—Muſt the infinite Author of exiſtence (with reverence be it ſpoken) muſt he deny himſelf the exertion of his boundleſs goodneſs in producing an univerſe of conſcious beings, of whom numbers will in the event come to happineſs, merely to prevent the ſelf-ſought deſtruction of a ſett of wicked degenerate beings? Either there muſt have been no creatures brought into being, above the rank of brutes, conſequently no happineſs above the animal enjoyed by any created being, or freedom of agency muſt have been given. And what freedom is conceivable without a poſſibility of error and irregularity, and conſequently of miſery? But is not the happineſs of one virtuous mind of more conſequence than the voluntary ruin of a thouſand degenerate beings? And is not a ſtate, in which we have the opportunity of attaining an inconceivable felicity, if we be not inexcuſably wanting to ourſelves, is not this a ſtate to be wiſhed for by mankind, if they had their choice either to come into it, or not? As for thoſe unhappy beings of our ſpecies, who, proceeeding from one degree of vice and folly to another, ſhall, at laſt, come to be hardned againſt all good, what is the value of thouſands of ſuch beings in the eſtimation of infinite wiſdom and rectitude, that their deſtruction ſhould be thought a hardſhip? For what elſe are ſuch degenerate beings fit? Beſides,

we know, that Divine Wiſdom has ſo planned out his univerſal oeconomy, that an inferior good ſhall, in the end, proceed from what was by wicked beings intended for ruin and miſchief. The whole human ſpecies were originaly formed capable of happineſs, and every individual has happineſs in his power. But as the Divine Wiſdom, which perfectly knew the future characters of all his creatures, with all the circumſtances they ſhould be affected by, foreſaw that numbers would come to deviate from the eternal rule of rectitude, it was proper that a ſecondary ſcheme ſhould be provided, by means of which thoſe free agents, who ſhould not voluntarily yield the due obedience and concurrence with the general deſign, ſhould by ſuperior direction be forced to contribute to the greater perfection and beauty of the whole. Of this ſecondary part of the divine oeconomy, we can trace out ſome very conſiderable parts, as the following, *viz.* We know that wicked and cruel men, in endeavouring to root out truth, and ſweep virtue from the earth, have ever been made, in ſpite of themſelves, the inſtruments of their more general eſtabliſhment. The whole race of perſecutors of Chriſtianity from *Herod* down to *Lewis* XIV. have ſo egregiouſly overſhot themſelves, as to be the very cauſes of the greater prevalency of true religion, which has given occaſion to the well-known ſaying, That the blood of the martyrs has been the ſeed of the church. In more private

private life, it is notorious, that a very conſiderable part of the trials of the virtue of good men, ariſes from the wicked part of the ſpecies. And every trial, where the good man comes off with honour, ſerves naturally to eſtabliſh his virtue, and to encreaſe his reward hereafter. The mere contraſt between the character of the pious, the temperate, and benevolent man, and that of the blaſphemer, the voluptuary, and the hard-hearted, ſets off the former to the utmoſt advantage, and preſents it to the general obſervation in the faireſt point of view; by which votaries to virtue are gained, and a horror at vice is raiſed in every conſiderate mind. And in the future ſtate, what powerful effects may be produced by the fearful and exemplary puniſhments inflicted on thoſe of our ſpecies, or others, who have degenerated from the dignity of their nature, and, as much as they could, defeated the end of their creation; may be imagined by thoſe who conſider what extenſive connexions between the various orders of being may hereafter come to be opened to our view, and that, as all moral and free agents of all orders are now allied, they may hereafter come to be united, and make one immenſe and univerſal ſociety; and whatever has been originally intended for uſefulneſs to one order of moral agents, may at laſt come to be uſeful to all. Something analogous to this we have in the caſe of the fallen angels, whoſe ruin is mentioned in Scripture as a warning to us.

It has been ſaid, Since the ſupreme Being foreſaw, without a poſſibility of error, what would be the exact character of every one of his creatures, was it not to have been expected, that ſuch of them as he knew would turn out wicked, and come to ruin, ſhould never have been brought into exiſtence, or cut off in the beginning of life? Our Saviour ſays of *Judas*, for example, that it had been better for him, never to have been born. How then, ſay they, came he to be born? Or why was he not removed out of life, before he came to the age of perpetrating the moſt atrocious crime, that ever was or can be committed?

Though I would not be the propoſer of ſuch preſumptuous queſtions, I think it innocent enough to endeavour to anſwer them. And firſt, if we conſider, that to infinite purity and rectitude wickedneſs is ſo odious as to render the guilty perſon altogether contemptible in his ſight, we ſhall not wonder, that he does not (ſo to ſpeak) judge it worth while to put him out of exiſtence, but lets him go on to fill up the meaſure of his iniquity, and reap the fruit of his doings. Again, it is to be conſidered, that infinite wiſdom intending to work out great and valuable ends by what is deſigned by his wicked creatures for ruin and miſchief, may therefore think proper to ſuffer them to go on to heap damnation on themſelves, and determine to make uſe of their ſelf-ſought deſtruction for the advantage of the more valuable part of his creatures. How the character of one

one, who does not yet exiſt, is fore-knowable, we have no conception, though we find from ſcripture that it is ſo, in the caſe of *Judas* particularly.

On the ſeeming difficulty of reconciling with the Divine goodneſs, our being placed in a ſtate perhaps more diſadvantageous for virtue and happineſs than that in which other orders of beings are created; a ſtate expoſed to ſuch a variety of temptations, as renders it hard for beings, furniſhed with ſuch moderate degrees of ſtrength as we are, to get the better in the important conflict, on the event of which our eternal happineſs depends; on this difficulty the following thoughts may ſerve to vindicate the Divine goodneſs, and to ſhew our condition to be extremely deſirable, inſtead of our being hardly dealt with, as ſome have inſinuated.

If our condition were ſuch, that one ſingle deviation from our duty would at once irrecoverably determine our fate, or that what may properly be called human infirmity ſhould doom us to irreverſible deſtruction, there might be ſome pretence for complaint. But if, ſo far from that, a faithful, conſtant, and prevailing endeavour to gain the Divine approbation, with watchfulneſs againſt temptations, and repentance for our faults, followed by amendment of life, be the means for attaining happineſs; where lies the mighty hardſhip? Nay, I would aſk any impartial perſon, whether it were more deſirable to be put in a

ſtate

ſtate of trial, in which there ſhould be upon the whole fewer chances of miſcarrying, but leſs allowance to be made in the final judgment for deviations; or to be in a ſtate expoſed to greater hazards, but with greater allowances to failures? Is it not the ſame thing in the event, how various the temptations in the ſtate of trial may be, if the merciful allowances, made by the judge, be proportioned to them. And who can doubt that infinite goodneſs will make all poſſible allowances hereafter for thoſe failures of weak and frail beings, which ſhall be found to have been owing to the mere infirmity of their nature, and the precarioufneſs of the preſent ſtate, not to daring impiety and preſumptuous wickedneſs. And it will accordingly be hereafter found, that a competent number of our ſpecies have actually been able, under the greateſt diſadvantages, to attain ſuch a meaſure of conformity to the Divine will, as ſhall, with the heavenly aſſiſtance, and allowances to be made for human frailty, be found proper for rendering them, upon the Chriſtian plan, objects of the mercy of the Judge of the world, and capable of being raiſed to a ſtate of happineſs; which will ſhew, that the miſcarriage of the reſt was wholly owing to their own perverſeneſs, and that they themſelves were the whole cauſe of that deſtruction, which the others eſcaped.

Every one knows, that, with reſpect to the preſent ſtate, excluſive of futurity, there is great

difficulty in getting through life, without ſome fatal miſconduct, which may embitter, and render it unhappy. And very doubtful it muſt be confeſſed to be, whether a new-born infant ſhall get over the precarious time of youth, without being drawn, through raſhneſs and thoughtleſſneſs, and the temptations of bad company, into ſuch a courſe of folly, as may effectually prevent his proving a uſeful and valuable member of ſociety. Yet we always look upon the birth of a child into the world as a ſubject of joy, not of grief or complaint, and upon the untimely death of a young perſon as a calamity; becauſe we take into our view the conſideration of its being in the power of every perſon, through divine aſſiſtance, which is never wanting to the honeſt mind, to behave well in life, if he pleaſes, and we hope he will do ſo. The warrior is ſufficiently apprized of the danger of engaging; a danger, which it is out of his power to ward off. Yet he longs to mix in the martial tumult; and engages with joy in the glorious ſtrife. Why ſhould man think himſelf hardly uſed in being placed in a poſt attended with occaſional danger; but in which he muſt be egregiouſly wanting to himſelf if he miſcarries finally? But if I ſhould not chooſe a happineſs attainable only through peril and trouble, but would rather, through ſordid ſtupidity and inactivity, deſire to decline exiſting upon ſuch terms; does it therefore follow, that the infinite Author of exiſtence

may

may not oblige me, in ſpite of my obſtinacy, or ſtupidity, to go through what he may judge proper for me, and neceſſary for his great ends? Has not the potter power over the clay? Suppoſe I ſhould not in this life be convinced of my obligations to the Divine goodneſs upon the whole, does it follow that I never ſhall?

It has been aſked, why the beneficent Author of being did not purſue ſuch an effectual ſcheme in the moral world as he has done in the natural? It was, for example, the Divine intention, that the human and other ſpecies ſhould abſolutely be preſerved as long as the world laſted. The two ſexes are therefore engaged to one another, and to their common off-ſpring, by ſuch powerful inſtinctive attractions as are found fully ſufficient to anſwer this important end. Why did not our Maker plant in our minds ſuch a ſtrong and irreſiſtible propenſity to virtue, as would have effectually ſecured the univerſal happineſs of the ſpecies? The anſwer is eaſy; viz. There is reaſon to believe, that, upon the whole, a very great number of the human ſpecies will, through Divine goodneſs, come to happineſs; ſuch a number at leaſt, as it ſhall in the end appear to have been, to ſpeak after the manner of men, worth while to have created the human ſpecies. But, to propoſe by mere inſtinctive attractions alone mechanically to draw free agents to the love and practice of virtue, is contradictory to the nature of the deſign. Becauſe what is wanted, is

not

not ſo much, that mankind, and other free agents, be brought to go, like machines, in a certain track, as that the rational faculties be formed in a rational manner to the entire love and habitual purſuit of goodneſs. This ſhews mechanical means to be improper alone for that purpoſe, though they may prove, as we find, uſeful helps; and that rational means are abſolutely neceſſary for acting upon rational natures. And it is ever to be remembered, that as the inanimate world is made to concur with the Divine ſcheme in a mechanical, and the animal in an inſtinctive manner, ſo rational beings, if they concur at all, muſt concur in a manner ſuitable to their nature, I mean, in a rational, free, and voluntary manner.

It has likewiſe been ſaid, why did not the ſcheme of the moral government of the world take in ſuch a ſucceſſion of continual interpoſitions, as would have effectually forced men to have been virtuous? To this may be anſwered, firſt, That miracles continued would ſoon be no miracles, and conſequently would have no effects different from thoſe produced by the common courſe of nature. And, ſecondly, That if Omnipotence were continually from time to time to ſtrike offenders dead, it is to be queſtioned, whether abſtinence from vice, and the forced practice of virtue, which would be the conſequence, would be ſufficient, in the nature of

things, to render moral agents capable of any high degree of happineſs.

For, ſuppoſe it were affirmed, that there is a natural abſurdity, or inconſiſtency, in propoſing to beſtow upon an order of creatures a very high degree of happineſs, upon any other footing, than in conſequence of their having paſſed with honour and victory through a ſtate of probation, in which there was ſome difficulty and danger, tho' not unſurmountable; ſuppoſe it were alledged, that there is a neceſſity in the nature of things, that the happineſs of all rational beings be proportioned and ſuited to their ſtate of probation; who could contradict this, or ſhew the bare poſſibility how ſuch a creature, as man, could, in a conſiſtency with his own nature, and the Divine rectitude, come to ſuch a degree and kind of happineſs, as we believe to be intended for him, without ſuch a preparation, as he is to paſs through in the preſent ſtate? If we judge according to what experience teaches us of our own turn of mind, which in all probability is univerſal, we cannot ſuppoſe the happineſs even of heaven itſelf would prove a happineſs to beings, who ſhould attain it too eaſily. When a prince, educated from his infancy in expectation of the regal dignity, comes to mount the throne of his anceſtors, we do not find, that it gives him any greater joy, than an heir to a very ſmall fortune has in entering upon his eſtate. But ſuppoſe a private perſon unexpectedly raiſed from poverty, and even from

from the fear of death, to an imperial throne; the tranſport of an elevation ſo unexpected, from circumſtances ſo grievous, will be likely to endanger his loſing his ſenſes. It is to be ſuppoſed, that to a ſpecies of beings created in heaven, or tranſported thither they knew not how, it would in reality be no heaven. Nor is there any poſſibility of conceiving of an order of beings raiſed to a ſtation of happineſs, without paſſing through a ſtate of trial, who ſhould not be in danger of falling from it again, for want of having been diſciplined to virtue, and in a rational, as well as habitual manner attached to goodneſs and obedience. So that trial and diſcipline ſeem neceſſary to be gone through by every ſpecies (I do not ſay by every individual) throughout the rational creation, ſooner or later.

It has likewiſe been aſked on this ſubject, how the juſtice of the immenſely different fates of two perſons, one of which proves obedient, and the other wicked, appears; ſince it may often be ſuppoſed, that he, who has actually proved virtuous, might, in more diſadvantageous circumſtances, have been overcome by the ſeverity of his trial, and been a reprobate; and he, who, by the force of very powerful temptations, has been ſeduced, might, in circumſtances more favourable to virtue, have ſtood his ground, and in the end come to happineſs?

This ſeeming difficulty is not very hard to obviate. For, firſt, as to him, who comes to hap-

pineſs, no one ever thought of injuſtice in the caſe of a benefit beſtowed. And he, who is Lord of all, may, without queſtion, do with his own what he will; he may give to one of his creatures ſuch advantages as ſhall in the event produce the effect of qualifying him for final happineſs. But the other, whoſe advantages were inferior, will not he have juſt ground for complaint? By no means. If the advantages, he enjoyed, were fully ſufficient, he ſtands ſelf-condemned for having abuſed them; nor could he in reaſon expect them to be more than ſufficient, much leſs to be greatly above what was ſufficient, and leaſt of all, to be equal to the greateſt advantages, ever allowed to any other perſon. Upon the whole, nothing is more evident, than that the being, who has actually proved obedient, by whatever means he has been brought to goodneſs, is, according to the nature and fitneſs of things, rewardable; and that the ſoul, which ſins, does in ſtrict juſtice deſerve to die.

The caſe of that very conſiderable part of the human ſpecies, which is cut off in immature age, without any opportunity of going through any trial in life, ſeems, at firſt view, to leſſen the force of what I have been ſaying of the neceſſity of a ſtate of diſcipline, to form the mind to virtue. For what is to become of thoſe, who die in infancy? Are they annihilated? Are they happy or miſerable in a future ſtate, who have done neither good nor evil? Or do they go through a ſtate of diſcipline in their ſeparate exiſtence?

To what may be ſaid on this point, I have the following brief anſwers to offer: Firſt, what I have above ſaid of the neceſſity of a ſtate of diſcipline, muſt be underſtood to be meant of a ſpecies in general. Perhaps the circumſtance of the bulk of a ſpecies's having gone through a ſtate of diſcipline, may be ſufficient for making ſuch an impreſſion upon the others, who happened to eſcape it, as may keep them to the ſteddy practice of virtue in all future ſtates. This may be the caſe; and yet it might be abſurd to imagine a whole ſpecies raiſed to happineſs, without at leaſt a conſiderable part of them going through a diſcipline for virtue, and thereby being qualified to inſtruct their more unexperienced fellow-beings in the importance of keeping to their duty, and the fatal danger and direful effects of ſwerving from it. So that what was above ſaid of the neceſſity of a ſtate of diſcipline for every ſpecies of rational agents in the univerſe, ſtands upon the ſame foot, notwithſtanding this difficulty.

But if every period of the exiſtence of free agents be, in fact, a ſtate of trial and diſcipline, in which it is poſſible (though ſtill leſs and leſs probable according to their farther improvements in virtue) that they ſhould fall; we may then conceive of the poſſibility of ſurmounting this difficulty by ſuppoſing that thoſe of the human ſpecies, who do not go through a ſtate of diſcipline in this life, may be hereafter made partakers of a lower degree of happineſs (as we

are in Scripture informed, that the manſions of future bliſs are various) which may prove their ſtate of trial, as the paradiſiacal was intended to have been for our ſpecies, and the angelic was of Satan and his angels. And as *Adam*, and the rebellious angels, fell from a higher ſtate than that which we are placed in, ſo may many of thoſe of our ſpecies, whoſe firſt ſtate of diſcipline may commence after this life is over, and after our world is judged, and brought to its conſummation. If ſo, thoſe of us who have paſt through this mortal life in ſuch a manner as to be found fit objects of the Divine mercy, will have great reaſon to congratulate ourſelves on our having paſſed the danger, and being more ſecure of our happineſs, than thoſe whom we are now apt to envy for their getting out of life ſo eaſily: For we know not what we ought to wiſh for. But He, who made us, knows.

If any reader ſhould imagine, that I intend to eſtabliſh any one hypotheſis as the real account of this matter; he miſtakes my deſign. All I mean by what I have advanced, is only to ſhew, that the circumſtance of a conſiderable part of our ſpecies's paſſing through no ſtate of diſcipline in this life, does not invalidate the neceſſity of a diſcipline to be gone through by every ſpecies of free creatures, in order to their being effectually attached to virtue, and ſo fitted for high degrees of happineſs and glory.

If

If after all that has been ſaid, and more, which might be offered, if it were proper, there ſhould remain difficulties with reſpect to the auguſt oeconomy of the infinitely wiſe and good Governor of the world; if ſuch ſhort-ſighted beings as we are, ſhould no way be able to reconcile the ſeeming contradictions, and ſurmount the ſuppoſed difficulties; this is no more than might have been expected. We are, through the meanneſs of our faculties, ignorant of infinitely more particulars than we know, in all extenſive ſubjects; and we ſee but part of one ſcene in the immenſe drama of the moral world. But in what little we ſee, we obſerve a thouſand times more than would have been ſufficient to prove a wiſe and good government already begun, and going on to perfection. If therefore, we have any candor, or any judgment to form a reaſonable deduction of one thing from another, we cannot avoid concluding, that what we do not comprehend of the Divine ſcheme, is of a piece with what we do comprehend, and that the whole is eſtabliſhed upon, and conducted by, perfect and unerring rectitude.

The very circumſtance of the difficulty we find in comprehending the whole of the Divine ſcheme both in the natural and moral world, while at the ſame time, we find we can enter into them ſo far, and ſee ſo much of wiſdom and contrivance, is a beauty, and a proof that the Author is one whoſe ways are immenſely above our ways, and his thoughts above our thoughts.

Conſidering the ſuperabundant care that has been taken for putting, and keeping us, in the way to happineſs, I think it may be fairly concluded, that whoever is not ſatisfied with the Divine wiſdom and goodneſs apparent in the conduct of the moral world, would not be ſatisfied with any poſſible degree of them. And it is only going on in the ſame way of finding fault, wherever we do not underſtand, and we ſhall at laſt take exception againſt all poſſibility of guilt and conſequent unhappineſs, and blame our Maker, if we are not brought into the world at once perfect ſeraphs; if this earth is not the third region of the heavens; if we cannot give ourſelves up to the moſt ſordid luſts and paſſions, and yet be prepared for, and admitted to the converſation of angels and archangels. But when weak ſhort-ſighted man has racked his narrow invention to ſtart, or to ſolve, a thouſand imaginary difficulties in the oeconomy of the infinite Governor of the univerſe, it will be found at laſt, that though clouds and darkneſs are round about him, yet righteouſneſs and juſtice are the habitation of his throne.

SECT.

SECT. VI.

Wherein the requiſite Concurrence of moral Agents conſiſts. Our Species under a threefold Obligation, the firſt reſpecting themſelves, the ſecond their Fellow-creatures, and the third, their Creator. Of the firſt of theſe, to wit, The due Care and Regulation of the mental and animal natures.

THE requiſite concurrence of moral agents, of whatever rank or order, or their conformity to the grand deſign of the univerſal Governor, which is the ground-work of univerſal harmony, perfection, and happineſs throughout the creation, conſiſts in their acting according to truth, rectitude, and propriety (in their reſpective ſtations, whether higher or lower in the ſcale of being, whether in ſtates of diſcipline, or reward) in all caſes or circumſtances that regard either themſelves, their fellow-beings, or their Creator. Whatever moral agent ſtrictly and univerſally obſerves this rule, he is of that character, which we and all rational beings call good, is amiable in the ſight of the Supreme judge of rectitude, and goodneſs; and it is as certain, that every ſuch being muſt be finally happy, as that the nature of things is what it is, and that perfect wiſdom and goodneſs muſt act rightly in governing the world.

What makes the duty of ſuch poor, ſhort-ſighted creatures as we are, who are yet but in the infancy of our being, is likewiſe the grand rule which every angel and archangel in heaven obſerves. Nay, it would be blaſphemy to think of the Supreme Governor of the univerſe, as conducting his immenſe and auguſt oeconomy otherwiſe than according to the ſacred rule, which himſelf has preſcribed for the conduct of his reaſonable creatures, and which is an attribute of his own infinitely perfect nature, I mean, immutable and eternal rectitude.

In what a light does this ſhew the dignity of human nature! What may we yet come to be? Made in the image of God himſelf! And taught to imitate his example! To what heights may we thus come to be raiſed? Would to God, we could be brought to conſider our own importance! Did we ſufficiently reverence ourſelves, we ſhould act a part worthy of the honours, for which our Creator gave us our being.

The rectitude of that part of our conduct, which regards ourſelves, conſiſts in the due care of our minds and our bodies, which two parts conſtitute our whole nature in the preſent ſtate.

Our mental powers are generally conſidered under the heads of intelligence, and paſſion. The office of the firſt, to judge, and diſtinguiſh between what ought to be purſued, and what avoided; of the latter, to excite to action. Where theſe two capital powers of the mind hold each her

her proper place, where the underſtanding is faithfully exerted in the ſearch of truth, and the active powers for attaining the real good of the creature, ſuch a mind may be properly ſaid to be duly regulated, and in a good condition.

The proper exertion of the underſtanding is in enquiry into important truth; and that underſtanding, which is furniſhed with extenſive and clear ideas of things, and enriched with uſeful and ornamental knowledge, is applied as the Divine wiſdom intended every rational mind in the univerſe ſhould be, if not in one ſtate, yet in another; if not univerſally in a ſtate of diſcipline, as that we are now in, yet in a ſtate of perfection, to which we hope hereafter to be raiſed. And whoever, in the preſent ſtate, is bleſt with the proper advantages for improving his mind with knowledge (as natural capacity, leiſure, and fortune) and neglects to uſe thoſe advantages, will hereafter be found guilty of having omitted an important part of his duty.

Having in the foregoing book treated pretty copiouſly of the improvement and conduct of the underſtanding, there is the leſs occaſion to enlarge upon that ſubject in this place. Let us therefore proceed to conſider wherein the rectitude of that part of our conduct, which regards the active powers of the mind, conſiſts.

In general, it is evident, that the will of every individual being in the univerſe ought to be effectually formed to an abſolute and implicit ſubmiſſion

ſubmiſſion to the diſpoſal of the univerſal Governor, which is ſaying, in other words, that every created being in the univerſe ought to ſtudy perfect rectitude in all his deſires and wiſhes. He who deſires any thing contrary to the Divine nature, and will, or to what is right and good, is guilty of rebellion againſt the Supreme governor of the univerſe.

The paſſions, as they are commonly, but improperly called, of the human mind, are various, and ſome of them of ſo mixed and compounded a nature, that they are not eaſily ranged under claſſes. The following are the principal. Love, or complacence, or deſire, whoſe object is, whatever appears to us good, amiable, or fit for us, as God, our fellow-creatures, virtue, beauty. Joy, excited by happineſs, real or imaginary, in poſſeſſion, or proſpect. Sympathy, or a humane ſenſe of the good or bad condition of our fellow-creatures; ſelf-love; ambition, or deſire of glory, true, or falſe; covetouſneſs; love of life; appetites of eating, drinking, recreation, ſleeping, and mutual deſires of the ſexes; mirth; anger; hatred; envy; malice; revenge; fear; jealouſy; grief.

It is the whole ſoul, or whole man, that loves, hates, deſires, or fears. Every paſſion is a motion of the whole being, toward or from ſome object, which appears to him either deſirable or diſagreeable. And objects appear to us deſirable, or diſagreeable, either from the real excellence our underſtanding perceives to be in them, as in vir-

tue, beauty, proportion, and their contraries, as vice, deformity, and confuſion; or from ſome peculiar fitneſs, or congruity between the objects and our particular make, or caſt of mind, which is the pure arbitrary effect of our make; as in the reciprocal love of the ſexes, and the antipathy we have at certain creatures.

Now the Divine will, the dignity of our nature, and perfect rectitude, unite in requiring that every one of our paſſions, and appetites be properly directed, and exerted in a proper manner and degree; not that they be rooted out and deſtroyed, according to the romantic notion of the antient Stoic philoſophers. It is in many caſes equally unſuitable to the dignity of our nature, that the motions of our minds be too weak and languid, as that they be too ſtrong and vigorous. We may be as faulty in not ſufficiently loving God and virtue, as in loving the vanities of this world too much.

Previous to what may be more particularly obſerved on the conduct of the natural inclinations or paſſions of the mind, it may be proper briefly to mention ſome general directions, which will be found of abſolute neceſſity toward our undertaking the buſineſs of regulating our paſſions with any reaſonable proſpect of ſucceſs.

The firſt preparatory direction I ſhall give, is, To habituate ourſelves as early, and as conſtantly as poſſible, to conſideration.

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The faculty or capacity of thought is what raiſes our nature above the animal. But if we do not uſe this noble faculty for the purpoſe of diſtinguiſhing between right and wrong, for finding out, and practiſing our duty, we had been as well without it. Nay, the beaſts have the advantage of thoſe of our ſpecies, who act the part of beaſts; in as far as they are not capable of being called to an account, or puniſhed, as unthinking men, for the neglect or abuſe of the nobleſt of God's good gifts, ſacred reaſon. It is dreadful to think of the conduct of by far the greateſt part of our ſpecies in reſpect of inconſiderateneſs. Mankind ſeem to think, nothing more is neceſſary, to remove at once all guilt, than only to drown all thought and reflexion, and then give themſelves up to be led or driven at the pleaſure of paſſion or appetite. But how will thoſe poor unthinking creatures be hereafter confounded, when they find the voluntary neglect of thought and conſideration treated as a moſt atrocious inſult upon the goodneſs of the Author of our being! And what indeed can be more impious, or contemptuous, than for beings endowed with a capacity of thought and underſtanding, to ſpurn from them the ineſtimable gift of heaven, or bury that talent which was given them to be uſed for the moſt important purpoſes of diſtinguiſhing between good and evil, and purſuing their own happineſs, and then pretend, in excuſe for all the madneſs

madneſs they are guilty of, that they did not think, becauſe they cared not to take the pains?

If thought be the very foundation of the dignity of our nature; if one man is preferable to another, according as he exerts more reaſon, and ſhews more underſtanding in his conduct, what muſt be ſaid of thoſe, who glory in what ought to be their ſhame, in degrading themſelves to the level of inferior beings?

Eſpecially, what proſpect does the preſent age yield, in which we ſeem to vye with one another, who ſhall carry pleaſure, and vanity, to the greateſt height, and who ſhall do the moſt to diſcountenance ſober thought, and regular conduct? To determine of times and ſeaſons, and how long a nation may continue to flouriſh, in which luxury and extravagance have taken place of all that is rational and manly; is what I do not pretend to. But I appeal to thoſe who beſt underſtand human nature, and the nature of government, and who know the hiſtory of other ſtates and kingdoms, which have been corrupted in the ſame manner, whether we have not every thing to fear from the preſent univerſal inconſiderate diſſolution of manners, and decay of virtue, public and private. May heaven take into its own hands the reformation of a degenerate people; and give comfort, and more agreeable proſpects, to thoſe who bleed inwardly for the decline of their ſinking country!

To

To return; let any perſon conſider the natural effects which an attentive and habitual conſideration of his own character and conduct are likely to produce; and then judge, whether it is not his duty to reſolve to act the part of a reaſonable creature. With reſpect to the conduct of his paſſions and appetites, let a man make it his conſtant cuſtom to ſpend ſome time every day in conſidering the following points, viz. Whether he indulges paſſion and appetite beyond the intention of nature; whether, for example, he ſets his heart upon gratifying the bodily appetites, for the ſake of luxurious indulgence, or if he only conſults health in eating, drinking, ſleeping, and recreations; whether he gives himſelf up to anger upon ſmall or no provocation; whether he ſets his love wholly upon the vanities of life, or if he aſpires habitually after ſomething nobler than any worldly purſuit, and ſo of the reſt. Let a man accuſtom himſelf to recollect every evening the miſcarriages of the day in reſpect of his paſſions and appetites, and he will ſoon find, if he be faithful to himſelf, which are prevalent, and ought to be ſubdued.

Unleſs we can bring our minds to ſome tolerable degree of tranquillity and ſobriety, we cannot hope to redreſs the irregularities of our paſſions and inclinations. What condition muſt that ſoul be in, which is continually engaged, and diſtracted various ways after pleaſure, honour, or riches? If any irregularity, or redundancy, ſprings up

up in ſuch a mind, there it muſt abide, and flouriſh, and ſtrengthen more and more, 'till it become too deeply rooted ever to be eradicated. How do we accordingly ſee the gay, the ambitious, and the covetous, give themſelves to be driven in a perpetual whirl of amuſements and purſuits, to the abſolute neglect of all that is worth attending to? But if the men of buſineſs cannot find time, for getting of money, and the ſons and daughters of pleaſure are too much engaged in hearing muſic, ſeeing plays, and in the endleſs drudgery of the card-table; to find time for getting acquainted with themſelves, and regulating their minds, I can tell them one truth, and a terrible one; They muſt find time to die, whether they have prepared themſelves for death or not.

Before any thing can be done to purpoſe toward bringing the paſſions under due ſubjection, it will be neceſſary to bring down high-ſwelling pride and ſelf-opinion, and to cultivate humility, the foundation of all virtues. For this purpoſe, it will be our wiſdom to endeavour to view ourſelves in the light we may ſuppoſe we appear in before that eye which ſees all things exactly as they are. We are therefore to conſider, that we do not appear to our Maker under the ſame diſtinctions as we do to one another. He does not regard one as a king, another as a hero, or a third as a learned man. He looks down from where he ſits enthroned above all conceivable height, through the vaſt ſcale of being, and beholds innumerable

numerable different orders, all gradually deſcending from himſelf, the higheſt created nature infinitely inferior to his own original perfection. At a very great diſtance below the ſummit of created excellence, and at the very loweſt degree of rational nature, we may ſuppoſe the all-comprehenſive eye to behold our humble ſpecies juſt riſing above the animal rank. How poor a figure muſt we make before him in this our infancy of being, placed on this ſpeck of creation, creeping about like inſects for a day, and then ſinking into the duſt! Nor is this all. For what appearance muſt a ſett of ſuch lawleſs beings as we are, make before that eye which is too pure to look upon evil without abhorrence? How muſt we appear to perfect rectitude and purity, guilty and polluted as we are, and covered with the ſtains of wickedneſs, which are the diſgrace of any rational nature? Is pride fit for ſuch an order of creatures as we are, in our preſent ſtate of humiliation and pollution? Can we value ourſelves upon any thing of our own? Have we any thing, that we have not received? And does any reaſonable creature boaſt of what it owes to another? Have we not infinite reaſon to loath ourſelves, and to be covered with ſhame and confuſion? And are ſhame and pride in any reſpect conſiſtent?

The few advantages we poſſeſs at preſent want only to be conſidered, to convince us how little they are to be boaſted of. The whole of our bodily perfections may be ſummed up in two words,

words, ſtrength, and beauty. As for the firſt, that is a poor qualification to boaſt of, in which we are, to ſay the leaſt, equalled by the plodding ox, and ſtupid aſs. Beſides, it is but three days ſickneſs, or the loſs of a little blood, and a *Hercules* becomes as manageable as a child. Who then would boaſt of what is ſo very precarious?

As to beauty, that fatal ornament of the female part of our ſpecies, which has exhauſted the human wit in raptures to its praiſe, which ſo often proves the misfortune of its poſſeſſor, and the diſquiet of him who gives himſelf to the admiration of it, which has ruined cities, armies, and the virtue of thouſands; what is beauty? A pleaſing glare of white and red reflected from a ſkin, incomparably exceeded by the gloſſy hue of the humble daiſy, which was made to be trod upon by every quadruped. The mild glitter of an eye, outſhone by every dew-drop on the graſs. Is it inherent in the ſtructure of the human frame? No; ſtrip off the ſcarf-ſkin to the thickneſs of a fiſh's ſcale; and the charming fair grows hideous to behold. A ſudden fright alarms her; a fit of ſickneſs attacks her; the roſes fly from her cheeks; her eyes loſe their fire; ſhe looks haggard, pale, and ghaſtly. Even in all the blooming pride of beauty, what is the human frame? A maſs of corruption, and diſeaſe covered over with a fair ſkin. When the animating ſpirit flies, and leaves the lovely tabernacle behind, how ſoon does horror ſucceed to admiration! How do we haſten to hide out of ſight the

loathſome remains of beauty! Open the charnel-houſe in which, a very little while ago, the celebrated toaſt was laid. Who can now bear to look on that face, ſhrivelled, and black, and loathſome, which uſed to be the delight of every youthful gazer? Who could now touch with one finger her, whoſe very ſteps the enamoured youth would have kiſſed? Can the lover himſelf go near, without ſtopping his noſe at her, who uſed to breathe all the perfumes of the ſpring? If beauty is a ſubject for boaſting, what is matter of mortification?

The accompliſhments of the mind are likewiſe two, knowledge and virtue. Is there any reaſon to be proud of the poor attainments we can in the preſent ſtate gain in knowledge, of which the perfection is, To know our own weakneſs? Is that an accompliſhment to be boaſted of, which a blow on the head, or a week's illneſs will deſtroy? As to our attainments in virtue, or religion, to be proud on thoſe accounts, would be to be proud of what we did not poſſeſs: for pride would annihilate all our virtues, and render our religion vain. If our virtue and religion be not founded in humility, they are falſe and ſophiſticate; conſequently of no value. And who would be proud of what is of no value?

The pride of riches is yet more monſtrous than any of the others. To turn the good gift of Providence into vanity and wantonneſs; to value one's ſelf upon what is altogether foreign and accidental,

cidental, and makes no part of merit, as not being the inherent qualification either of body or mind, nor any way valuable or honourable, but according as we uſe it; what can be conceived more remote from common ſenſe; unleſs we reflect on the folly of thoſe who take occaſion to value themſelves on their birth, and are proud that they can trace back a great many fathers, grandfathers, and great-grandfathers, whoſe virtues and vices belonged wholly to themſelves, and are gone with them? It is amazing to think how poor a pretence is thought ſufficient to ſupport human folly. The family of the cottager is as antient as that of the lord of the manor, if it could be traced. And in every family there have been ſcoundrels, as well as heroes, and more of the former than the latter.

As pride was the introduction to all the evil that we know of in the moral world, ſo humility is the only foundation, upon which the ſtructure of virtue can be raiſed. A ſubmiſſive, tractable temper is alone capable of being formed to obedience. A mind puffed up with ſelf-opinion cannot bring itſelf to liſten to advice, or to yield to juſt authority. The wiſe man endeavours to attain ſuch a knowledge of himſelf, that he may neither, on one hand, act a part unworthy of himſelf, nor, on the other, forget his preſent humble ſtation, and preſume on any thought or action unſuitable to it.

Before we can hope to go any great length in the due regulation of our paſſions or inclinations,

we muſt reſolve carefully to ſtudy, and thoroughly to maſter, that moſt uſeful of all ſciences, ſelf-knowledge.

It is not in ſchools, in univerſities, or in the voluminous works of the learned, that we muſt ſearch for this moſt important branch of knowledge. He, who would know himſelf, muſt ſearch carefully his own heart, muſt ſtudy diligently his own character. He muſt above all things ſtudy the peculiar weakneſſes of his nature. In order to find out theſe, he ought to recollect often what particular follies have moſt frequently drawn him into difficulties and diſtreſſes. If he finds, that he has been often engaged in quarrels, and diſputes, he may conclude, that the paſſion of anger is too powerful in him, and wants to be brought under ſubjection. If he recollects various inſtances of his behaving in a lewd, an intemperate, an envious, or a malicious manner, and that he has often had occaſion to blame himſelf for a behaviour which has brought upon him the reflexions of the ſober and regular part of people, it is evident, where the fault lies, and what is to be corrected. But conſcience, and the ſacred rule of life contained in holy ſcripture, are more certain teſts by which to try one's character, than the general opinion of mankind.

Nothing is more common, than for a perſon's weakneſs to be known to every body but himſelf. Let a man therefore ſet his own conduct at a diſtance

a diſtance from himſelf, and view it with the ſame eye as he may ſuppoſe a ſtranger regards it; or with the ſame as he himſelf views that of another perſon. Let one endeavour to find out ſome perſon, whoſe behaviour and character comes the neareſt to his own; and in that view himſelf, as in a mirror. And as there is generally ſome reſemblance between the characters of thoſe, who keep up a long friendſhip, a man may, generally ſpeaking, ſee his own likeneſs in that of his friend.

It will be of great conſequence to you to know what character is drawn of you by your enemy, eſpecially if you find ſeveral agree in the ſame. Enemies will help you, more than friends, in diſcovering your faults; for they will aggravate what your friends will leſſen.

Attend carefully to the general ſtrain of your thoughts. Obſerve what ſubjects riſe oftenеſt, and abide longeſt in your mind, and what you dwell upon with the greateſt delight. You will by that find out what paſſion, or appetite, has the aſcendant, and ought to be ſubdued. It is from the fulneſs of the heart that the mouth ſpeaks. And from a man's eager manner of talking on certain favourite ſubjects, every one, who ſpends an hour in his company, finds out his prevailing paſſion, while he himſelf perhaps is, all his life, wholly ignorant of it. Laſtly, whoever means in earneſt to come at the true knowledge of his own weakneſſes, let him liſten,

with the moſt ſacred attention, to every motion of conſcience. There is more meaning in her ſofteſt whiſper, than in the loudeſt applauſe of the unthinking multitude.

Another direction of the utmoſt conſequence to our ſetting about the due regulation of our paſſions, and indeed to our behaving in general in a manner ſuitable to the true dignity of our nature, is, That we reverence ourſelves.

The effect, which a juſt and habitual ſenſe of the grandeur and importance of our nature, and the high elevation we are formed capable of, would have upon us; is, To inſpire us with ſentiments worthy of ourſelves, and ſuitable to the gracious deſigns of the Author of our being. This is very conſiſtent with that humility which becomes us ſo well in our preſent condition. Humility is commendable: Baſeneſs odious. Did men habitually conſider themſelves as formed for immortality, they would not ſo generally ſet their whole hearts upon the preſent life. Did they conſtantly keep in mind their heavenly original, and the end of their creation, they could not thus ſink their very ſouls into earth. Did they often reflect upon the worth of immortal minds, they would not think of ſatisfying them with the groſs and ſordid objects of ſenſe. Did they conſider themſelves as intended for companions of angels and archangels, they would not, by indulging carnal appetite, debaſe themſelves to the level of the brutes. Did they duly reverence themſelves, as beings

beings formed for the contemplation, and fruition of infinite Perfection, they would think it beneath them to place their happineſs in the enjoyment of any thing created.

One general rule carefully attended to, and the judgment of our own conſciences according to it faithfully followed, would make the whole conduct of the paſſions and appetites clear, and would prevent our falling into any error in indulging or ſuppreſſing them. The rule is, To conſider, what good purpoſe is to be gained by the exertion of every active power of the mind; and to take care, that in the conduct of every paſſion and appetite, we have that end ſingly, and nothing elſe, in view.

I will therefore proceed to ſhew in a particular manner, how this rule is to be applied in the regulation of thoſe of our paſſions and appetites, which have important effects upon our moral characters.

That motion of the mind, which we call Love, or Deſire, tends naturally to draw and engage us to whatever is either in its own nature truly amiable and excellent, or which our preſent ſtate renders it neceſſary that we ſhould be engaged to. There is no danger of our loving God, or virtue, or deſiring our own real happineſs, too much. For theſe are proper and worthy objects of the beſt affections of every rational being, throughout the whole of its exiſtence. The inclination, we find in ourſelves toward ſuch objects, is the

pure effect of our having clear and rational apprehenſions of their real, internal excellence; not of any factitious or arbitrary taſte implanted in our minds, or any arbitrary fitneſs in ſuch objects to gain our affections. No rational unprejudiced mind in the univerſe ever had, or can have, juſt apprehenſions of the Divine perfections, and of the excellence of virtue, that has not admired and loved them. And the clearer the apprehenſions, the ſtronger muſt be the affection.

To mix and confound together all the motions of the mind, and to range them all indiſcriminately under one head, is reducing the whole philoſophy of human nature to a mere jumble. Hunger or thirſt, for example, are no more to be conſidered under the head of ſelf-love, than anatomy under that of aſtronomy. The pure, diſintereſted love of virtue is no more to be called a factitious, or arbitrary inclination, as the mutual deſire of the ſexes undoubtedly is, than gravitation is to be called ſolidity or extenſion. The bodily appetites, improperly ſo called, are plainly factitious, and temporary: for we can conceive of a living, conſcious, rational being, who has not ſo much as an idea of them; nay the time will come, when they will be wholly forgot by at leaſt *ſome* of our own ſpecies. But is it poſſible to conceive of a living, conſcious, rational being, who, if left to itſelf, free, and uncorrupted, ſhould be able to avoid loving virtue, or could be indifferent to goodneſs, as ſoon as it became

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an object of its perception? Again, the fitneſs between the appetite and the object is in ſome caſes evidently arbitrary. Different ſpecies therefore chooſe different ſorts of food, which, without that arbitrary fitneſs, would be alike grateful, or diſagreeable to all taſtes; ſo that graſs and hay would be as acceptable to the lion and the vulture, as to the horſe and the ox; and fleſh as agreeable to the horſe and ox, as to the lion and vulture. On the contrary, in other caſes, this fitneſs is by no means arbitrary or factitious; but unalterable and neceſſary. A mind, to which apparent truth was no object; an underſtanding, which ſaw no beauty or deſireableneſs in undoubted virtue or rectitude, muſt be perverted from its natural ſtate, and debauched out of itſelf.

Our love to earthly objects may eaſily be carried to exceſs. For it is evident, that a very moderate attachment is ſufficient, where the connection is intended to hold only for the preſent ſhort life. As on the other hand thoſe objects which are intended to be the final happineſs of our being, ought to be purſued with the utmoſt ardency of affection. To purſue, with unbounded deſire, an object, whoſe nature and perfections are bounded within very narrow limits, is a groſs abſurdity; as to be cold and indifferent to that which is of ineſtimable worth is contrary to ſound reaſon. But to obſerve the general conduct of mankind, one would think they conſidered God, and virtue, and eternal happineſs, as objects

objects of little or no conſequence; and good eating and drinking, pleaſure and wealth, as alone worth the attention of reaſonable beings. One would imagine they believed that the latter were to be the everlaſting enjoyment of the rational mind, and the former the tranſitory amuſement of a few years at moſt. What do mankind purſue with the greateſt eagerneſs? What are their hearts moſt ſet upon? What does their converſation moſt run upon? What is their laſt thought at night, and their firſt in the morning; and what employs their minds through the whole day? I am afraid, the objects, which engage their ſupreme attention, are of no higher a nature, than how to get money; to raiſe themſelves, as they very improperly call it, in the world; to concert a party of pleaſure; or ſome other ſcheme of as little conſequence. Now, if the preſent were to be the final ſtate, this turn of mind might be proper enough. But that a being formed for immortality ſhould ſet his whole affections upon this mortal life, is as if a traveller going to a diſtant country, ſhould make abundant proviſion for his voyage, and ſpend his whole fortune by the way, leaving nothing for his comfortable ſettlement, when he arrives, where he is to paſs his days.

Suppoſe an unbodied ſpirit, of the character of moſt human minds, entered upon the future ſtate, left to itſelf, and neither raiſed to poſitive happineſs, nor condemned to poſitive puniſhment; I aſk what muſt be the condition of ſuch a being? What

What can be more deplorable than the ſituation of a mind, which has loſt all the objects of its delight, and can enjoy nothing of what makes the happineſs of the ſtate in which it is placed? For, alas, there is no eating and drinking, no ſtock-jobbing or trafficking, no enjoyment of wine or women, no parliamenteering in the world of ſpirits. And in this world of ſpirits we ſhall all find ourſelves before many years be gone. What then is our wiſdom? Not, ſurely, to ſet our whole affections upon this preſent fleeting ſtate. But to habituate ourſelves to think of the eternal exiſtence hereafter as the principal end of our being, and what ought therefore to fill up the greateſt part of our attention, and to engage our warmeſt affections, and moſt eager purſuit.

That any being in the univerſe, ſhould ever bring itſelf to hate itſelf, or deſire its own miſery, as miſery; is impoſſible. Though a reaſonable ſelf-love, rightly directed, is highly commendable, nothing is more eaſy, or common, than to err egregiouſly with reſpect to ſelf-love. Moſt people love themſelves ſo very much, and in a way ſo abſurd, that they love nothing elſe, except what is cloſely connected with themſelves; and that they love more for their own ſakes, than any thing elſe. That mind muſt be wonderfully narrow, that is wholly wrapt up in itſelf. But this is too viſibly the character of moſt human minds. The true ſtandard of rectitude, as to ſelf-love, is, That every one love himſelf as God

may be ſuppoſed to love him; that is, as an individual among many. To the Divine mind every object appears as it really is. We ought therefore to endeavour to ſee things in the light in which they appear to that eye which comprehends the univerſal ſyſtem. If we thus enlarged our conceptions, we ſhould never ſuffer our whole regards to be poſſeſſed by any one finite object whatever; not even by ſelf. Nor ſhould we ever think of preferring ourſelves unjuſtly to others, or raiſing ourſelves upon their ruin. For that is to act, as if a man did not conſider himſelf as a part, and a very ſmall part, of an immenſe whole; but as the only being in the univerſe; than which nothing can be more monſtrous. If we loved ourſelves as our Maker loves us, we ſhould not think of being partial to our faults; but ſhould view them with the ſame eye as we do thoſe of others. It is a great unhappineſs, that we cannot root out of our fooliſh hearts this ſhameful weakneſs. Does it at all alter the real evil of a bad action, that it was I who did it? Will a lie become a truth in my mouth? Is not every man's ſelf as much ſelf, and as dear to him, as I am to myſelf? And is the immutable and eternal nature of right and wrong to be changed by every man's fancy? If I ſee injuſtice, falſhood, or impiety in another in the moſt odious light, does not a third perſon ſee them in me in the ſame manner? And does not the all-piercing eye of Heaven ſee them alike in all? If I am ſhocked at the vices of another

ther perſon, have I not a thouſand times more reaſon to be ſtartled at my own? Thoſe of another can never do me the prejudice, which my own can do me. The plague at *Conſtantinople* can never affect me, as if it attacked me in my own perſon.

The love of praiſe, or deſire of diſtinction, is a paſſion as neceſſary to a thinking being, as that which prompts it to preſerve its exiſtence. But as this tendency, like all the others which enter into the human make, ought to be ſubject to the government of reaſon, it is plain, that no approbation, but that of the wiſe and good, is of any real value, or deſerves the leaſt regard. The advantage gained by the exertion of this univerſal propenſity, is, that men may be thereby excited to ſuch a courſe of action, as will deſerve the approbation of the wiſe and good. But the love of undiſtinguiſhing applauſe will never produce this effect. For the unthinking multitude generally give their praiſe where it is leaſt due, and overlook real merit. One *Charles* of *Sweden*, or *Lewis* of *France*, the common furies of the world, ſhall receive more huzzas from the madding croud, than ten *Alfreds*, the fathers of their country. So that the deſire of promiſcuous praiſe, as it defeats the moral deſign of the paſſion, is altogether improper, and miſchievous, inſtead of being uſeful. The rule for the conduct of this paſſion, is, To act ſuch a part as ſhall deſerve praiſe; but in our conduct to have

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as little regard as poſſible to praiſe. A good man will dare to be meanly, or ill thought of, in doing well; but he will not venture to do ill, in order to be commended.

The paſſion, or emotion, which we call anger, ſerves the ſame purpoſe as the natural weapons, with which the animal creation is furniſhed, as teeth, horns, hoofs, and claws; I mean for our defence againſt attacks and inſults. Cool reaſon alone would not have ſufficiently animated us in our own defence, to ſecure us in the quiet poſſeſſion of our natural rights; any more, than it would alone have ſuggeſted to us the due care and nouriſhment of our bodies. To ſupply, therefore, the deficiencies of reaſon in our preſent imperfect ſtate, paſſion and appetite come in, and are neceſſary to the human compoſition. And it would have been as much to the purpoſe, that the antient Stoics ſhould have directed their diſciples to eradicate hunger and thirſt, as anger, grief, love, and the other natural paſſions. It is indeed too true, that in our preſent imperfect ſtate we are in much greater danger of yielding too much to our paſſions, than of ſubduing them too thoroughly; and therefore we find all wiſe teachers, and particularly the beſt of teachers, who came from heaven to inſtruct us, labouring to inculcate upon mankind the conqueſt of paſſion and appetite, without ſetting any bounds to the length they would have the conqueſt carried; as knowing, that there is no need to caution

tion men againſt an exceſs on this ſafeſt ſide. And, with reſpect to the paſſion we are now treating of, if a perſon does not ſhew himſelf wholly incapable of being moved, if he does not directly invite injuries and aſſaults, by bearing without all meaſure; if he does but from time to time ſhew that he has in him too much ſpirit to ſuffer himſelf to be trampled upon; I am clearly of opinion, that he cannot exert this paſſion too ſeldom, or too moderately.

If we take the ſame method for coming at the true ſtate of things in this, as in other caſes, viz. endeavouring, as before directed, to get that view of them which appears before the all-comprehenſive eye of God, we ſhall then ſee how abſurd the exceſſive indulgence of this lawleſs paſſion is. To the ſupreme Mind we appear a ſet of infirm, ſhort-ſighted, helpleſs beings, engaged to one another by nature, and the neceſſity of our affairs; incapable of greatly prejudicing one another; all very nearly upon a footing; all guilty before him; all alike under his government, and all to ſtand hereafter before the ſame judgment-ſeat. How ridiculous muſt then our fatal quarrels, our important points of honour, our high indignation, and our mighty reſentments appear before him? Infinitely more contemptible than the contentions between the frogs and mice do to us in the ludicrous antient poem aſcribed to *Homer*.

But

But this is not all. Let it be conſidered alſo how the impiety of our hatred and reſentment, muſt appear before that eye, which ſees all things as they are. That the ſupreme Governor of the world ſhould chooſe to vindicate to himſelf the privilege of ſearching the hearts, and of knowing the real characters of all his creatures, is no more than might be expected. Whoever therefore preſumes to pronounce upon the character or ſtate of any of his fellow-creatures before God, aſſumes the incommunicable privilege of Divinity. Now, every man, who hates his fellow-creature, muſt firſt conclude him to be wicked and hateful in the ſight of God; or he muſt hate him whom God loves; which is ſuch a piece of audacious oppoſition to the Divine mind, as hardly any man will confeſs himſelf capable of. Again, for a private perſon to take upon him to avenge an injury (in any way beſides having recourſe to lawful authority which is founded in the Divine) what is it leſs than aſſuming the authority of God himſelf, whoſe privilege it is to decide finally, either immediately, or by thoſe whom he has authorized for that purpoſe?

Farther, let the effects of this unruly paſſion, carried to its utmoſt length, and indulged univerſally, be conſidered, that we may judge whether it be moſt for the good of the whole, that we conquer, or give way to it. Experience ſhews, that every paſſion and appetite, indulged, would proceed to greater and greater lengths without end.

end. Suppoſe then every man to lay the reins upon the neck of his fury, and give himſelf up to be driven by it without controul into all manner of madneſs and extravagance: The obvious conſequence muſt be the deſtruction of the weaker by the ſtronger, till the world became a deſert.

Whatever is right for one man to practiſe, is equally right for all, unleſs circumſtances make a difference. If it be proper that one man indulge anger without cauſe, no circumſtances can make it improper that all do ſo. If it be proper, that one man ſuffer his paſſion to hurry him on to abuſe, or deſtroy an innocent perſon, it is proper that all do ſo; and that the world be made one vaſt ſcene of blood and deſolation.

People ought to be very careful in the younger part of life, not to give way to paſſion: for all habits ſtrengthen with years. And he, who in youth indulges an angry and fretful temper, by the time he comes into years, is likely to be unſufferable by his peeviſhneſs; which, tho' not ſo fatal and terrible as a furious temper, is more frequently troubleſome, and renders the perſon, who gives way to it, more thoroughly contemptible. The exceſſive ſtrength of all our paſſions is owing to our neglect to curb them in time, before they become unconquerable.

When therefore you feel paſſion riſing, inſtead of giving it vent in outragious expreſſions, which will inflame both your own, and that of the

perſon you are angry with, accuſtom yourſelf to call reflexion to your aſſiſtance. Say to yourſelf, What is there in this affair of ſufficient conſequence to provoke me to expoſe myſelf? Had I not better drop the quarrel, if the offence were much more atrocious, than be guilty of folly? If I have loſt money, or honour, by this injurious perſon, muſt I loſe by him my wits too? How would a *Socrates*, or a *Phocion* have behaved on ſuch an occaſion? How did a greater than either behave on occaſion of incomparably greater provocation, while he had it in his power to have ſtruck his enemies dead with a word? True greatneſs appears in reſtraining, not giving a looſe to paſſion.

Make a reſolution for one day, not to be put out of temper upon any account. If you can keep it one day, you may two; and ſo on. To keep you in mind of your reſolution, you may wear a ring on a particular finger, or uſe any other ſuch contrivance. You may accuſtom yourſelf never to ſay any thing peeviſh, without thinking it over as long as you could count ſix deliberately. After you have habituated yourſelf for ſome time to this practice, you will find it as unnatural to blunder out raſh ſpeeches, as you do now to deliberate before you ſpeak.

Envy and malice are rather corruptions of natural paſſions, than the natural growth of the human heart. For the very leaſt degree of them is wicked and unnatural, as well as the greateſt.

Emulation,

Emulation, out of which ariſes envy, is one of the nobleſt exertions of a rational mind. To aſpire to equal whatever is truly great in a fellow-creature, what can ſhew more conſpicuouſly true greatneſs of mind? What worthy mind ever was without this diſpoſition? But to look with an evil eye upon, or to hate, that excellence in another, which we cannot, or will not emulate, is the very diſpoſition of an evil ſpirit. For it is hating a perſon for the very thing which ought to excite love and admiration.

Some of the other exceſſes we are apt to run into in indulging our paſſions have to plead for themſelves, that the exertion of thoſe paſſions is attended with a ſenſible pleaſure. But anger, hatred, malice, envy, revenge, and all the iraſcible paſſions, the more ſtrongly they operate, the greater torment they produce. And it muſt be an extraordinary degree of virulence in a mind, that makes it chooſe to torture itſelf for the ſake of exerting its ſpite againſt another. Which ſpite alſo, through the goodneſs of an over-ruling Providence, inſtead of hurting the perſon attacked, moſt commonly recoils in vengeance upon him who has indulged in himſelf ſo deviliſh a temper.

The natural inclination we have to ſympathiſe with our fellow-creatures, to make their caſe our own, and to ſuffer a ſenſible pain when we think of their miſery or misfortune, was placed in us, to draw us more effectually, than reaſon alone would, to endeavour to relieve them. It is there-

fore evident, that this motion of the mind ought to be encouraged and ſtrengthened in us, becauſe we cannot be too much attached to our fellow-creatures, at the ſame time, that we ought to act chiefly upon rational motives in endeavouring to relieve the diſtreſſes of our brethren of mankind.

Fear is a natural paſſion of the mind, and ought no more to be eradicated than any of the others. A reaſonable caution againſt, and deſire of avoiding whatever would prove in any degree hurtful, is the prudent motion of every rational created mind. The conduct of this paſſion conſiſts in directing our fear, or caution, to proper objects. To fear poverty, or pain, or death, more than guilt, to dread the miſery of an hour, or of a life, more than future puniſhment for ages, is fearing a leſſer evil more than a greater, chooſing an extreme degree of miſery for the ſake of avoiding an inconſiderable one.

Though a daſtardly ſpirit is, generally ſpeaking, a proof of baſeneſs of mind, it does not therefore follow, that to dare to attempt any thing, however unreaſonable or unjuſt, is true fortitude. A bully, a drunkard, or a lunatic, will attack what a wiſe man will avoid encountering with. For the natural, or adventitious vivacity of temper in ſuch perſons, which is owing to bodily conſtitution, or intoxication by liquor, or to a preternatural flow of ſpirits, hurrying them on, and reaſon being in them very weak, or altogether inſufficient for reſtraining their impetuoſity,

ſity, it is no wonder, if they run into the moſt extravagant and dangerous adventures, nor if they ſometimes carry all before them. For the very notion, that a perſon, or body of men, are reſolute to a deſperate degree, renders them much more formidable to people who have not, or perhaps cannot, work themſelves up to the ſame pitch. True courage is cool and deliberate, founded in a ſtrong attachment to juſtice, truth, love of one's country, and of true glory; and is regulated and reſtrained by wiſdom and goodneſs. True fortitude appears infinitely more glorious in the faithful martyr, who, unſubdued by want, and impriſonment, goes on, without fear, but without pride, friendleſs and alone, and in the midſt of the inſulting croud gives up his body to the devouring flames, in honour of God and his truth; than in the bluſtering commander at the head of his thouſands, who marches to battle, and, in confidence of the might of his army, already aſſures himſelf of victory. And yet the latter is immortalized by the venal ſtrain of flattery, while the former is paſſed over in ſilence.

The loſs of ſome good which we have either enjoyed, or had reaſonable hopes of attaining, or the arrival of ſome poſitive evil, is a reaſonable ſubject of reaſonable grief; and the concern of mind ought to be proportioned to the greatneſs of the loſs, or the ſeverity of the calamity which is come upon us. As for the afflictions of this preſent life, ſuch as the loſs of riches, of health,

of the favour of the great, of the good opinion of our fellow-creatures, of friends or relations, by removal to diſtant places, or by death; theſe and the like, being all temporary, we ſhew our wiſdom moſt by bearing them with patience, or even, moſt of them, with indifference, in conſideration of the proſpect we have, if we be virtuous, of having all ſuch loſſes made up to us hereafter; of being hereafter poſſeſſed of the true and unfading riches; of having the integrity of our characters cleared before men and angels; of being reſtored to our valuable friends and relations, and united to them in a better and happier ſtate, where they and we ſhall be fitter for true and exalted friendſhip, and where we ſhall no more fear a cruel ſeparation.

There is but one juſt ſubject of great or laſting grief, that I know of; it is the conſideration of our guilt before God. That we ourſelves, or others, ſhould ever have offended the kindeſt and beſt of beings, whom we were, by all the ties of nature and reaſon, obliged to love, to obey, and to adore; this is a grief that will lie heavy upon every conſiderate mind. And, till that happy day comes, when all tears are to be wiped away, and all griefs buried in oblivion, the thought of our own guilt, and that of our unhappy unthinking fellow-creatures, ought not for any long time to be out of our view. Nor is there any degree of concern (inferior to what might diſqualify us for the performance of the duties of life) too great

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for the occaſion. Nor can any thing be imagined more abſurd, than for a reaſoning being to expreſs more uneaſineſs about a trifling loſs or affliction, which, like all temporal diſtreſſes, will after a few years be to us, as if they had never been; at the ſame time that the conſideration of thoſe offences againſt the Majeſty of heaven, which may have fatal effects upon their final ſtate, raiſes no uneaſineſs in their minds. That a thinking creature (or rather a creature capable of thought) ſhould fret for the loſs of a mortal friend or relation, whom he always knew to be mortal; and be under no concern for his having alienated from himſelf, by his wickedneſs, the favour of the moſt powerful, the moſt faithful, and the kindeſt friend. That a rational creature ſhould bitterly lament the loſt patronage of a prince, or peer, whoſe favour he knew to be uncertain and precarious; and give himſelf no trouble about his having forfeited the protection of Him, upon whom he depends for every moment's exiſtence, and every degree of happineſs he can enjoy in the preſent life, and through all eternity! Surely ſuch grief is indulged with great impropriety.

While we live in the body, it is plainly neceſſary, that we beſtow a reaſonable attention upon the body, for providing whatever may be uſeful for its health and ſupport. To think of eradicating, or deſtroying the appetites, would be making ſure of the deſtruction of the body. The

point we ought to have in view is, therefore, to conduct and regulate them ſo, as beſt to anſwer the wiſe ends, for which they were planted in our nature.

That every living creature ſhould have in its make a ſtrong deſire to preſerve life, was neceſſary. But in rational minds all natural inſtincts are to be under the controul of reaſon; the ſuperior faculty to govern the inferior. It is evident, that there may be many caſes, in which rectitude and propriety may require us to get over the inſtinctive love of life, as well as to conquer the influence of the other natural paſſions. Whoever loves life more than virtue, religion, or his country, is guilty of a groſs abſurdity, in preferring that, which is of leſs conſequence, to that which is of greater. We are always to endeavour, as before obſerved, to view things in the light, they may be ſuppoſed to appear in to the all-comprehenſive Mind. But I cannot bring myſelf to believe, that my life appears to the ſupreme Mind of ſuch importance, that it ought to be preſerved to the prejudice of ſacred and eternal truth; that it is better, the people ſhould periſh for one man, than one man for the people.

If the heroes and ſages among the Heathens, who had no ſuch ſure proſpect of a future exiſtence as we have, or may have; if they, whoſe views of a life to come, were rather ſtrong deſires, than well eſtabliſhed hopes; if they ſhewed ſuch a contempt of the preſent life, as to give it

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up with joy and triumph for the ſervice of their country, and for the ſake of truth; of which hiſtory furniſhes inſtances almoſt innumerable; it were to be expected, that we ſhould, in the contempt of life, greatly exceed them; which, to our ſhame, is far from being the caſe.

A competency of the good things of life being neceſſary for the ſupport of life, it is evident, that a reaſonable degree of care, induſtry, and frugality, is altogether proper; of which I have treated pretty copiouſly in the firſt part of this work. Whenever this care for the conveniencies of life proceeds ſuch a length, as to produce a love of riches for their own ſake, it is then, that a man ſhews himſelf bewildered and loſt to all rational and judicious views, and enchanted with a mere imaginary object of no real value in itſelf. That a man ſhould beſtow his whole labour in heaping up pieces of metal, or paper, and ſhould make his very being wretched, becauſe he cannot get together the quantity he aims at, which he does not need, nor would uſe, if he had them in his poſſeſſion; is much the ſame wiſdom, as if he ſpent his life in filling his magazines with cockle-ſhells, or pebbles. If it be likewiſe remembered, that every paſſion indulged, becomes in time an unconquerable habit, and that a fixed love of ſordid riches is altogether unſuitable to the ſpiritual immortal ſtate, for which we were intended, where gold and ſilver will be of no value; if it be conſidered, that a great degree of avarice is wholly

wholly inconſiſtent with every generous ſentiment, and even with common honeſty; and that any conſtant purſuit whatever, which engages the whole attention, and takes it off from thoſe ſublime views of futurity, and thoſe preparations for immortality, which are abſolutely neceſſary toward our being found fit for that final ſtate, is highly criminal; if theſe, and various other conſiderations be allowed their due weight, it will appear, that covetouſneſs is a vice altogether unſuitable to the dignity of our nature, and that the ſafe ſide to err on, with regard to riches, is, To be too indifferent, rather than too anxious about them.

If the ſole deſign of the appetite of hunger be, To oblige us mechanically, by means of pain, to take that due care of ſupporting the body by proper nouriſhment, which we could not have been ſo agreeably, and effectually brought to, by pure reaſon, it is obvious, that the view we ought to have in eating, is the ſupport of life. That kind of food, which is fitteſt for nouriſhing the body, and the leaſt likely to breed diſeaſes, is evidently the beſt. And if artificial diſhes, unnatural mixtures, and high ſauces, be the leaſt proper for being aſſimilated into chyle and blood, and the moſt likely to produce humours unfriendly to the conſtitution; what is commonly called rich feeding is, in truth, ſlow poiſon. It is therefore very ſtrange, that men ſhould have ſo little command of themſelves, that, for the ſake of

of the trifling pleaſure of having their palates tickled with a ſavoury taſte, they ſhould venture the ſhortening of their days. At the ſame time, that the enormous expence of a rich table might be ſpared, and the ſame, or rather indeed a much higher pleaſure, in eating, might be enjoyed, if people would but give themſelves time and exerciſe to acquire a hearty appetite. But I really believe that is what ſome have never experienced, and conſequently have no conception of.

The vices we are in danger of running into, by which our table may become a ſnare to us, are, beſtowing too great expence, or too much time at our meals, over-gorging nature, or hurting our health by a wrong choice of food. Nothing ſeems more evident, than that to waſte or ſquander away the good gifts of Providence, eſpecially in ſo ſordid a manner, as upon the materials of gluttony, is altogether unjuſtifiable. The only rational notion we can form of the deſign of Providence in beſtowing riches upon ſome, and ſinking others in poverty, is, That men are placed in thoſe different circumſtances with a view to the tryal and exerciſe of different virtues. So that riches are to be conſidered as a ſtewardſhip, not to be laviſhed away in pampering our vices, and ſupporting our vanity, but to be laid out in ſuch a manner as we ſhall hereafter be able to anſwer for, to Him, who entruſted us with them. And whoever beſtows yearly in gorging and gluttony, what might ſupport a great many families in in-

duſtry and frugality, let him ſee to the conſequences.

Again, if we be really ſpirits, though at preſent embodied; it ſeems pretty plain, that the feeding of the body ought not to engroſs any very great proportion of our time. If indeed we look upon ourſelves as more body than ſpirit, we ought then to beſtow the principal attention upon the body. But this is what few will care to own in words; which makes their declaring it by their practice the more abſurd, and inconſiſtent.

If it be our duty to preſerve our health and life for uſefulneſs in our ſtation, it can never be innocent in us to pervert the very means appointed for the ſupport of the body, to the deſtruction of the body. We are here upon duty, and are to keep upon our poſt, till called off. And he who trifles with life, and loſes it upon any frivolous occaſion, muſt anſwer for it hereafter to the Author of life.

Laſtly, if it be certain, that in the future world of ſpirits, to which we are all haſtening, there will be no occaſion for this appetite, nor any gratifying of appetites at all, nothing is more evident, than the abſurdity of indulging it in ſuch an unbounded and licentious manner, as to give it an abſolute aſcendant over us, and to work it into the very mind, ſo as it ſhall remain, when the body, for whoſe ſake it was given, has no farther occaſion for it. The deſign our Maker had in placing us in this ſtate of diſcipline, was to give us an

opportunity

opportunity of cultivating in ourſelves other ſorts of habits than thoſe of gluttony and ſenſuality.

Of the many fatal contrivances, which our ſpecies, too fertile in invention, have hit upon for corrupting themſelves, defacing the bleſſed Maker's image upon the mind, and perverting the end of their creation; none would appear more unaccountable, if we were not too well accuſtomed to ſee inſtances of it, than the ſavage vice of drunkenneſs. That ever it ſhould become a practice for rational beings to delight in overturning their reaſon; that ever men ſhould voluntarily chooſe, by ſwallowing a magical draught, to brutify themſelves; nay to ſink themſelves below the level of the brutes; for drunkenneſs is peculiar to our ſpecies; this madneſs muſt appear to other orders of being wonderfully ſhocking. No man can bear the leaſt reflexion upon his underſtanding, whatever he will upon his virtue. Yet men will indulge a practice, by which experience convinces them, they will effectually loſe their underſtanding, and become perfect idiots. Unthinking people are wont to look with great contempt upon natural fools. But in what light ought they to view a fool of his own making? What can be conceived more unſuitable to the dignity of human nature, than the drunkard, with his eyes ſtaring, his tongue ſtammering, his lips quivering, his hands trembling, his legs tottering, and his ſtomach

ſtomach heaving. Decency will not ſuffer me to proceed in ſo filthy a deſcription. The ſwine wallowing in the mire is not ſo loathſome an object as the drunkard; for nature in her meaneſt dreſs is always nature: but the drunkard is a monſter, out of nature. The only rational being upon earth reduced to abſolute incapacity of reaſon, or ſpeech! A being formed for immortality ſunk into filth and ſenſuality! A creature endowed with capacities for being a companion of angels, and inhabiting the etherial regions, in a condition not fit to come into a clean room, among his fellow-creatures! The lord of this world ſunk below the vileſt of the brutes!

One would think all this was bad enough: but there is much worſe to be ſaid againſt this moſt abominable and fatal vice. For there is no other that ſo effectually and ſo ſuddenly unhinges and overturns all virtues, and deſtroys every thing valuable in the mind, as drunkenneſs. For it takes off every reſtraint, and opens the mind to every temptation. So that there is no ſuch expeditious way for a perſon to corrupt and debauch himſelf, to turn himſelf from a man into a demon, as by intoxicating himſelf with ſtrong liquor. Nor is there, perhaps, any other habit ſo bewitching, and which becomes ſo ſoon unconquerable as drunkenneſs. The reaſon is plain. There is no vice which ſo effectually deſtroys reaſon. And when the faculties of the mind are over-turned, what means can the unhappy

happy perſon uſe, or what courſe can another take with him, to ſet him right? to attempt to reform a confirmed drunkard is much the ſame as preaching to a madman, or idiot. Reaſon, the helm of the mind, once deſtroyed, there is nothing remaining wherewith to ſteer it. It muſt then be left to run adrift.

It is deplorable to think of the miſerable pretences made uſe of to apologize for this beaſtly vice. One excuſes himſelf by his being neceſſarily obliged to keep company. But it is notorious that nothing more effectually diſqualifies a man for company, than to have his tongue tied, and his brains ſtupified with liquor. Beſides, no man is obliged to do himſelf a miſchief, to do another no kindneſs. Another pretends he is drawn by his buſineſs, or way of life, to taverns and places of entertainment. But a man muſt never have been drunk, nor ever ſeen another drunk, to imagine that ſtrong liquor will help him in driving bargains. On the contrary every body knows, that one is never ſo likely to be impoſed on as when he is in liquor. Nor is the pretence of drinking to drive away care, to paſs the time, or to cheer the Spirits, more worthy of a rational creature. If, by the force of ſtrong liquor, a man's cares may be mechanically baniſhed, and his conſcience lulled aſleep for a time; he can only expect them to break looſe upon him afterwards with the greater fury. He who artificially raiſes his ſpirits by drinking, will find

find them ſink and flag in proportion. And then they muſt be raiſed again. And ſo on, till at laſt he has no ſpirits to raiſe. For underſtanding, and fortune, and virtue, and health, all fall before this dreadful deſtroyer. As for drinking to paſs the time, inſtead of an excuſe, it is an aggravation. It is criminal enough to waſte expence and health, without laviſhing precious time beſides.

Nor is the pretence of being odious among one's neighbours, and being looked upon as a preciſe fellow, for living temperately, any better than the others. Alas! we are not hereafter to ſtand or fall by the opinion of our neighbours. Beſides, we ourſelves in many caſes ſhew a neglect of the opinion of mankind; and do not croſs our inclinations to gain it. And if in one inſtance, why not in another? We may be ſure of the favourable opinion of the ſober part of our acquaintance by keeping on the right ſide; the approbation of one of whom is preferable to that of a thouſand drunkards.

Of all kinds of intemperance, the modern times have produced one of the moſt fatal and unheard of, which like a plague over-runs and lays waſte both town and country, ſweeping the lower part of the people, who indulge in it, by thouſands to the grave. The unhappy invention I mean, and which ſeems by its miſchievous effects to claim Satan himſelf for its author, is the drinking of fermented ſpirituous liquors. This is no place for ſetting forth the deſtructive effects of that

that moſt ſhocking ſpecies of debauchery. That has been the ſubject of a parliamentary enquiry. And it is to be hoped, that the accounts laid before that auguſt body, which were tragical enough to melt a heart of rock, will be the cauſe of producing an effectual remedy for that ruinous national evil.

The beſt human means I know of, for conquering a habit of drinking, are to avoid temptation, to accuſtom one's ſelf by degrees to leſſen the quantity, and lower the ſtrength of the liquor by a more and more copious dilution with water.

The natural deſire of the two ſexes was placed in us for the ſupport of the ſpecies. It is not therefore to be eradicated; but only brought under proper regulations, ſo as the end may the beſt be anſwered. That the union of one man and one woman for life, was the original deſign, is evident from the near equality between the numbers of the two Sexes. For one man therefore to break looſe upon the other Sex, and appropriate to himſelf a plurality, is evidently againſt the order of nature, and inconſiſtent with the good of ſociety, in which every individual is to enjoy all his natural rights and privileges, and all monopolies are unjuſt. That the marriage engagement ought to be ſacred and indiſſoluble but by death, is plain from conſidering the various bad effects of its being precarious, as alienating the affections of the two parties for one another, and for

their common children, and thereby defeating one main end of their coming together, viz. to be mutual helps and ſupports to one another under the various diſtreſſes of life; encouraging inconſtancy and an endleſs deſire of variety; and expoſing one of the ſexes to the unhappineſs of a ſlaviſh dependence. That all commerce of the ſexes, where a due care is not had for the off-ſpring, is vicious, is evident from conſidering, that thereby the very deſign of nature is fruſtrated. That invading the bed of our neighbour is highly injurious, is plain, becauſe it is a breach of the moſt ſolemn engagements, and moſt ſacred vows, without which there could be no marriage. That all commerce of the ſexes, except in lawful marriage, is unjuſtifiable, is certain, in that it tends to the diſcouragement of that moſt wiſe and excellent inſtitution. And that it is the indiſpenſable duty of every man and woman to enter into that ſtate, excepting in the caſe of unſurmountable conſtitutional or prudential objections, is as plain, as that it is the duty of every man and woman to eat and drink. For it is as certainly the deſign of Providence, that the ſpecies be kept up, as that the life of individuals be preſerved by nouriſhment. And what is the duty of one is the duty of all, unleſs in the caſe of inſuperable obſtacles.

The indulgence of this appetite to exceſs is as clearly unjuſtifiable as that of any other. The effects of every undue ſenſual indulgence are ſinking and debaſing the mind, miſleading it from

the ſublime views, and noble purſuits, for which it was created, and habituating it to diſobedience and miſrule, which is directly contrary to the intention of a ſtate of diſcipline. Whoever gives himſelf up to the uncontrouled dominion of paſſion or appetite, ſells himſelf an unredeemable ſlave to the moſt rigorous, and moſt deſpicable of tyrants. And it is only going on farther and farther in ſuch baſe indulgencies, and at laſt, no gratification whatever of the deſire will be ſufficient. Yet, there is no ſtate in life, in which abſtinence at times, from ſenſual gratifications of every kind, is not indiſpenſably neceſſary. Every reader's common ſenſe will convince him of the truth of this, and particularly with reſpect to the ſubject we are now upon. Though marriage is the natural way of gratifying the mutual deſires of the ſexes, every body knows, that a continued indulgence is utterly incompatible with the marriage ſtate. Which ſhews plainly that the due regulation and reſtraint of every paſſion and appetite, is the ſcheme of nature, and that unbounded exceſs is contrary to nature. And yet, how ſtrange is it to conſider the poor and ſuperficial fallacies, which mankind think ſufficient to ſatisfy themſelves with, rather than give up their favourite vices and follies? What can be more contemptible than the common plea for all exceſſive and irregular indulgences, particularly the criminal commerce of the ſexes; That we are formed with natural inclina-

tions, deſires, and powers; and why ſhould we not act according to the bent of our nature?

To purſue the ends of nature, according to the order of nature, is ſo far from being criminal, that it is virtue. But exceſs and irregularity are directly contrary to nature's views. This is ſeen by every man, in every caſe where paſſion and appetite do not blind him. We have a natural appetite, for example, to food. How comes it then, that we do not as often over-gorge our ſtomachs with plain bread as with dainties? The one would be as irregular and vicious as the other. Yet we ſhould ſee a ſtrange abſurdity in the former, while we can excuſe ourſelves in the latter. If we are formed with a natural appetite for food, why do we make ſuch a difference in the indulgence of our appetite in delicacies, from plain food? The truth is, that exceſs of all kinds is indefenſible, and unnatural. If it were natural, we ſhould be as apt to eat too much bread, as too much paſty. It is the deplorable weakneſs of our nature, that we yield to appetite and paſſion, till they become too powerful for us, and lead us captive in ſpite of ourſelves. While we pretend, we only follow nature, we are indulging a falſe and vitiated taſte. And in no indulgence is there more ſhameful exceſs committed, nor greater deviations from the intention of nature, than in that which is the ſubject of this paragraph. Were the above apology for exceſs

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of any weight, that is, were it proper we ſhould do every thing we have power or inclination to, we might by the ſame plea throw ourſelves down a precipice, becauſe we have power to do it. The thief may ſteal, becauſe he has a natural deſire to eaſe rather than labour; the drunkard may drink himſelf to death, becauſe it is natural to quench thirſt; the paſſionate man may kill his enemy, becauſe he has a natural diſpoſition to repel injuries; in ſhort, if this plea be good for any thing, it renders all exceſſes, which take their firſt riſe from a natural appetite, innocent.

Such an indulgence in ſleep, in leiſure or inaction, and in relaxations or amuſements, as may be neceſſary for the refreſhment and health of theſe frail vehicles we now inhabit, is allowable. And the juſt meaſure of ſuch indulgence is different according to different conſtitutions and ways of life. But it is to be feared, that hundreds exceed the bounds of moderation, for one, who reſtricts himſelf too much. Let every reader lay his hand upon his heart, and think what loſt time he will have to anſwer for hereafter. The ſafe ſide is, to indulge rather too little than too much. A tolerable conſtitution will hold better with eight hours ſleep, in the twenty-four, than with more. And as to relaxations or diverſions, the plea of their neceſſity is wholly groundleſs, except for thoſe who live a laborious, or ſtudious life. What neceſſity for thoſe, whoſe whole exiſ-

tence is one continued courſe of indolence and relaxation, for relaxation? Relaxation from what? Not from buſineſs; for they never do any. The proper relaxation from idleneſs, would be to do ſomewhat. And there is no mortal, who is one degree above an indiot, that is not capable of doing ſomething worth living for.

Whoever can perſuade himſelf, that it was the intention of his Maker, in placing him in this ſtate of diſcipline, that he ſhould paſs an exiſtence as uſeleſs as that of a ſtock or a ſtone (ſuppoſing him innocent of all poſitive crimes) muſt have ſtrange notions of the Divine oeconomy, and of his own nature. If that ſort of life be lawful and proper for one, it is ſo for all. And where would then be the buſineſs of life, the improvement of ourſelves, the care of our children, the government of kingdoms, the advancement of the ſpecies toward a preparation for a future ſtate of happineſs? Let no one pretend, that he cannot find employment, till he has at leaſt performed all that is preſcribed in this book.

I will here throw together a few remarks on ſome of the modern faſhionable amuſements.

Gaming is an amuſement wholly unworthy of rational beings, having neither the pretence of exerciſing the body, of exerting ingenuity, or of giving any natural pleaſure; and owing its entertainment wholly to an unnatural and vitiated taſte; the cauſe of infinite loſs of time; of enormous deſtruction of money, of irritating the paſ-

ſions,

ſions, of ſtirring up avarice, of innumerable ſneaking tricks and frauds, of encourageing idleneſs, of diſguſting people againſt their proper employments, and of ſinking and debaſing all that is truly great and valuable in the mind*.

* Cards being now become ſo univerſal, as to be the nuiſance of almoſt all companies, it may ſeem neceſſary in oppoſing the general practice of the polite, to ſupport what is above ſaid againſt card-playing by ſome authorities, which will, I believe, appear at leaſt equal to thoſe of any of the moſt eminent modern defenders of that ſtupid and miſchievous amuſement.

" Play, wherein perſons of condition, eſpecially ladies" [in our times all ages, ſexes, and ranks] " *waſte* ſo much of their " time, is a plain inſtance that people cannot be idle; they " muſt be doing ſomething," [if it be miſchief] " For how " elſe could they ſit ſo many hours *toiling* at that which gives " generally more *vexation* than delight to people, while they " are engaged in it? It is certain, gaming leaves no *ſatisfaction* " behind it to thoſe who reflect when it is over, and it no way " *profits* either *body* or *mind*. As to *eſtates*, if it ſtrike ſo deep " as to concern them, it is then a trade, and not a recreation, " wherein few thrive; and at beſt, a thriving gameſter has " but a poor trade on't, who fills his pockets at the price of " his reputation."

LOCKE on *Educat.* p. 366.

And afterwards, page 368.

" As to cards and dice, I think the ſafeſt and beſt way is " never to *learn* any play upon them, and ſo to be incapaci- " tated for thoſe *dangerous temptations* and incroaching *waſters* " of *uſeful time*."

What would this great man have ſaid, had he lived in our times, when it is common for people to ſpend five or ſix hours every night at cards, Sunday not excepted; which amounts to

As for the theatrical diverſions, they are managed in ſuch a manner, that a ſober perſon may be aſhamed to be ſeen at many of them. It is notorious that the bulk of our *Engliſh* plays are not fit to be ſeen in print. The tragedies are, generally ſpeaking, a heap of wild flights and bombaſtic rants, and the comedies of ſcandalous impurities; neither of which can be thought worthy the attention of a people who value themſelves either upon their taſte or their virtue. There may be found, perhaps, in the *Engliſh* language, about twenty or thirty pieces, eſpecially ſome of *Shakeſpear's*, which, if ſubjected to pretty ſevere caſtigation, and properly repreſented, might be ſaid to make a noble entertainment. But theſe ſerve only as traps to draw in the innocent and unwary to a delight in the diverſions

a fourth or fifth part of the whole time of life, and comes in all to perhaps ten or a dozen years in a long life?

Let us now hear Mr. *Addiſon* on the ſame ſubject. SPECT. N°. 93.

"I muſt confeſs I think it is below *reaſonable* creatures to "be altogether converſant in ſuch diverſions as are merely "*innocent*, and have nothing elſe to recommend them, but "that there is *no hurt* in them. Whether any kind of gaming "has *even thus much* to ſay for itſelf, I ſhall not determine; "but I think it is very wonderful to ſee perſons of the *beſt* "*ſenſe* paſſing away *hours together* in *ſhuffling* and dividing a "pack of cards, with no other *converſation*, but what is made "up of a few *game phraſes*, and no other *ideas* but thoſe of "*black* or *red ſpots* ranged together in different figures. Would "not a man laugh to hear any one of this ſpecies complaining "*that life is ſhort?*"

verſions of the theatre. And by the ſagacity of the managers of the theatres, who very well know, that the groſs of an audience have no taſte for what is really excellent in thoſe entertainments, and are only to be pleaſed with ſhew, or ribaldry; by their cunning management, I ſay, it comes about, that it is not much ſafer for a young and innocent perſon to be preſent at the repreſentation of a chaſte and virtuous piece, than of one of the moſt profane. What does it avail, that the piece itſelf be unexceptionable; if it is to be interlarded with lewd ſongs or dances, and tagged at the concluſion with a ludicrous and beaſtly farce? I cannot therefore, in conſcience, give youth any other advice, than generally to avoid ſuch diverſions, as cannot be indulged without the utmoſt danger of perverting their taſte, and corrupting their morals.

As for maſquerades, if the intention of them be intriguing, they anſwer ſome end, though a bad one; if not, they ſeem by all accounts to be ſuch a piece of wretched foolery, as ought to be beneath any but children, or mad people. That a thouſand people ſhould come together in ridiculous dreſſes only to ſqueak to one another, *I know you*, and, *Do you know me!* Poſterity, if the world ſhould grow a little wiſer, will not believe it; but will conclude, that their grandfathers and grandmothers were very naught. A multitude aſſembled together in maſks, by which means ſhame, the great reſtraint from vice, is baniſhed!

baniſhed! What can be imagined more threatening to the intereſts of virtue and decency *.

I know of no very material objection againſt the entertainments of muſic called concerts, if they be not purſued to the loſs of too much time or money. Thoſe called oratorios, being a kind of drama's taken from Scripture, are, I think, exceptionable, as they tend to degrade thoſe awful ſubjects, and to turn into diverſion what is more proper for devotion.

Promiſcuous dancing at public balls, is a diverſion no way proper for young people, as it gives an opportunity for the artful and deſigning of either ſex to lay ſnares for one another, which ſometimes prove fatal. At the ſame time, country-dancing in private, where the whole company are known to one another, where the parents or other judicious perſons preſide, where decency is kept up, and moderation uſed, muſt, I think, be owned to be both an agreeable amuſement, and a wholeſome exerciſe.

* Among various other the immortal honours of our preſent moſt excellent Sovereign, George III. may this page hand down to poſterity, that he has ſet his royal authority and example in full oppoſition to the vices here remarked on, viz. Maſquerading, Gaming, and criminal Gallantry. And to the indelible diſgrace of the preſent age, be it remembered, that, in conſequence of the diſcontent of a ſet of diſappointed grandees, the merit of ſo amiable a prince has not been eſteemed as, from the known generoſity of the people of Britain, might have been expected.

Hunting,

Hunting, the favourite diverſion of the country-gentry, is, without doubt, the very beſt that can be uſed, for the preſervation of health, excluſive of the danger of broken bones. But, as a gentleman ought in all reaſon to be poſſeſſed of other endowments and accompliſhments, beſides that of a healthy conſtitution, one would think, a few other employments ſhould have place; ſuch as reading, overlooking their buſineſs, improving their eſtates, ſerving their friends, and country, and preparing themſelves for another world: for ſurely that cannot be ſaid to be the exiſtence of a thinking, ſocial, immortal creature, which is divided between hunting, drinking, and ſleeping.

The diſtreſs many people ſeem to be in for ſomewhat to paſs the time, might have been prevented by their ſtudying in the earlier part of life to acquire a little taſte for reading and contemplation. Whoever can find an agreeable companion in a book, a tree, or a flower, can never be at a loſs how to paſs his leiſure hours, though he ſhould not be in the way of the card-table, the tavern, or the play. And it is well worth while to acquire a little taſte for mental amuſements in one's early years (the only time of life in which it is to be acquired) for when all is ſaid, it is but a miſerable caſe for a man to have in himſelf no entertainment for himſelf; but to be obliged to be beholden to others for all his pleaſure in life.

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Our ſituation in the preſent ſtate is ſuch, that every thing makes a part of our diſcipline; and we are in danger, without proper care, and attention, of deviating into error in ſo ſeemingly trivial a particular as that of dreſs. Too much time, or too great expence beſtowed on dreſs, that is, more than might do the buſineſs decently, becomes criminal. For that is waſting upon an affair of very little conſequence, what is of great value, and might be much better applied. Levity, or wantonneſs appearing in dreſs is alſo unjuſtifiable, as tending to produce bad effects on ourſelves and others.

To conclude, the proper conduct of the paſſions and appetites conſiſts briefly, In following nature in the indulgence of them; in taking care, above all things, not to ſuffer them to get ſuch a hold of the mind, as to enſlave it, that is, to engage ſo much of its attention as may diſqualify it for worthier purſuits, make it unhappy by continually hankering after the gratification of one low deſire or other, and lead it to place its whole ſatisfaction in ſuch gratifications. The due conduct of the paſſions and appetites ſuppoſes reaſon to bear rule in the mind, and the inferior powers to be in ſubjection. Whoever keeps his mind conſtantly in ſuch a condition, is at all times in a capacity for acting a part ſuitable to the dignity of human nature, and performing his duty to his fellow-creatures, and to his Creator.

SECT.

SECT. VII.

Of our Obligations with Reſpect to our Fellow-creatures.

THE foundation upon which the whole of our duty to our fellow-creatures muſt reſt, is benevolence. And the meaſure of our love to the reſt of mankind, is, its being equal to that which we have for ourſelves. The reaſon why it is made our duty to love our neighbours as ourſelves, is, That being proper, there ſhould be ſuch an order of beings, as man, created, it was impoſſible for Divine wiſdom to propoſe the production of ſuch a ſpecies, without intending them to be united together as a ſociety; and that mutual love and agreement are eſſentially neceſſary to the very idea of a ſociety. As it is impoſſible to conceive a material ſyſtem, in which repulſion ſhould univerſally prevail, and attraction have no place, but every particle of matter ſhould repel every other, ſo is it inconceivable that a ſociety ſhould ſubſiſt, in which every individual ſhould hate every other.

Our ſelf-love is very wiſely made the meaſure of our love to our fellow-creatures, becauſe every individual ought to conſider himſelf as only one among many, and no way of greater conſequence than his neighbour, before the univerſal Governor, than as he may be more virtuous than he. And

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as human penetration does not reach ſo far as to judge of internal characters, we cannot upon any rational pretence pronounce ourſelves preferable to others, nor conſequently ought to love our fellow-creatures at all leſs than ourſelves. It is true, that the order of human affairs is ſuch, as to direct every man to apply himſelf to the conducting of his own concerns, and conſulting his own intereſt; becauſe every man knows beſt, and is therefore the fitteſt, to undertake the management of his own concerns, temporal and ſpiritual. By which means every man's concerns are likely to be managed to the beſt purpoſe. But it does not follow from thence, that any man ought in his own mind to prefer himſelf to another, or to love himſelf more than his neighbour.

Whoever loves his neighbour as himſelf, will ſhew his affection by conſulting his intereſt in all things which may concern either his body, his ſoul, his fortune, or reputation. For every man, who rationally loves himſelf, will ſtudy his own intereſt with reſpect to theſe four great concerns.

To conſult our neighbour's intereſt, is, to do him no injury; to prevent, as much as in us lies, any other perſon from injuring him; to do him juſtice in every reſpect, and, beyond juſtice, to ſhew him all the kindneſs in our power.

To be negatively good, if we proceed no farther, is deſerving no more praiſe than a ſtock or

a ſtone. And thoſe ſelfiſh and narrow-hearted people, whoſe whole praiſe is, that they do no harm, are not to be reckoned upon as members of ſociety; but are mere cyphers in the creation. Such ſordid diſpoſitions, as will admit no thought of any thing but ſelf, can never be fit for any place in that more extenſive future ſociety, which will be compoſed wholly of beings ennobled and perfected by virtue and univerſal benevolence. For in that higher ſtate, every individual will be connected with the whole, and the whole with every individual. So that there will be no detached or ſeparate beings. This ſhews the neceſſity of our becoming habituated to conſider ourſelves as parts of the whole, and of enlarging our minds by an extenſive benevolence. This alſo ſhews the ſtrange abſurdity of making retirement from ſociety, in the active time of life, a part of religion; as by that unnatural and monſtrous practice one third part of our duty is wholly cut off, and the human mind, which ought by all poſſible methods to be drawn and engaged to ſociety, is detached and ſeparated from it, and habituated to think with horror of the very ſtate for which it was formed.

Affection to our neighbour will prevent our injuring him, and incline us to do him the utmoſt juſtice, firſt as to his fortune, or poſſeſſions. I begin with this, as that part of our neighbours concerns, which is of the leaſt conſequence; intending to proceed afterwards to thoſe which touch

touch more nearly. Now the foundation of property is in reaſon, or rectitude; that is to ſay, That a perſon may in ſuch a manner come to be poſſeſſed of a portion of the good things of life, that he may have an excluſive right to it, againſt all mankind; ſo that for any other to deprive him of ſuch poſſeſſion, againſt his conſent, would be iniquitous. As the infinite Author of all things has an unqueſtionable title to all creatures and things in the univerſe, it is evident, that he may in the courſe of his providence give to any man the poſſeſſion of any of the good things of life; and what He gives cannot without injuſtice be, by any private perſon, forcibly or clandeſtinely taken away. At the ſame time, the general conſent of ſociety, or the law of the country, in which a perſon lives, may, for wiſe and generally beneficial purpoſes, render property, otherwiſe rightful, not tenable; and may make all things common, except where the Divine law has abſolutely prohibited alienation, as in matrimony. In a country, where excluſive property is eſtabliſhed and ſupported by law, or mutual agreement, a right to valuable poſſeſſions may come, firſt, by birth. It is plainly agreeable to reaſon, that a parent provide for his own off-ſpring, preferably to ſtrangers. The natural affection of even the inferior creatures for their young, leads to this. By the ſame rule all ſucceſſions among perſons related by marriage, or blood, are equitably, and legally eſtabliſhed; and it becomes injuſtice

to

to deprive any one of property ſo acquired. The fruits of a perſon's ingenuity, or labour, are alſo lawful property. Purchaſe is the giving what one had a right to, for ſomething which belonged to another; and therefore purchaſe gives a juſt right. Free gift, from one who has power to give, makes a juſt title. In things, which have been claimed by no one, the firſt poſſeſſion gives a title, as in the caſe of unhabited countries. To ſeize a country by force of arms, to the prejudice of the original inhabitants, is a flagrant injuſtice. For as the firſt entrance into an uninhabited country, being by the direction of Providence, gives the firſt diſcoverers a title to it, it is evident, that no perſon can, without violating the laws of juſtice, diſturb the firſt poſſeſſors in their property, or pretend to a ſettlement in that country, but by agreement with the firſt poſſeſſors.

I do not think it neceſſary to my purpoſe, to determine with the utmoſt exactneſs the boundaries of property, or how far one perſon may lawfully encroach upon another's right. Whoever ſincerely loves his neighbour with the ſame meaſure of affection as himſelf, will be as tender of his property, as he would wiſh others to be of his own; and whoever reſolves to regulate his conduct according to rectitude, will be more delicately fearful of breaking in upon another's right, than of loſing part of his own. And with the utmoſt reaſon. For in violating his neighbour's right,

he becomes guilty before God; whereas in loſing his own, the worſt conſequence is, his being deprived of what is of no great value in itſelf, and which he muſt ſoon leave behind him.

Whatever practices tend to the violation of any perſon's juſt property, they are all contrary to the affection we ought to entertain for our neighbour, and to ſtrict rectitude. Whether ſuch practices are openly violent, or more indirect and concealed, the conſequences being the ſame, the vice is the ſame; unleſs where increaſed or diminiſhed by circumſtances of greater or leſs aggravation. Thus, receiving, or concealing, the property of another, whether ſtolen, robbed, or found, if the proprietor is known, or aſſiſting or countenancing another in ſuch practices, is the ſame injury to our neighbour, as direct theft.

The moſt extenſive and ruinous violation of property, is that which is committed by thoſe ſcourges and curſes of this lower world, Tyrants. When one of thoſe furies, the diſgrace and horror of the human ſpecies, breaks looſe upon mankind, a whole kingdom is robbed, a quarter of the world plundered. And in that day, when all differences of rank will be at an end; dreadful in that day will be the charge againſt thoſe who, being by Divine providence raiſed for the general happineſs of mankind, have uſed their power only to ſpread extenſive miſery and diſtreſs among God's creatures.

Whoever

Whoever is by the Divine providence raiſed to a ſtation of power and influence, and takes the advantage of his power, to oppreſs his inferiors, ſhews himſelf not only unjuſt, but cowardly. For true greatneſs of mind ſcorns any unfair advantage. And, if it be unjuſt to appropriate to one's ſelf what belongs to another, however able he may be to bear the loſs, much more cruel and baſe is it for the rich to avail themſelves of their power to the diſtreſſing of their poor tenants or dependents. What will add but a ſmall matter to the already overgrown wealth, and ſuperfluous ſtate of the powerful landlord, wrung from the poor induſtrious farmer, reduces him and his numerous family, to the extremity of diſtreſs. And that heart muſt have little feeling that would not ſpare a ſuperfluous diſh, or a needleſs bottle, rather than a family of half-a dozen fellow-creatures ſhould want bread.

I know of no oppreſſion in this happy country, of ſuch great and extenſive bad conſequence, as that occaſioned by the abuſe of law: The grievance of which is ſo much the more calamitous, as the very intention of law is the redreſs of grievances. It is notorious, that it is in the power of any raſcally pettifogger to keep a whole town in fear, and to ruin as many as he pleaſes of the poor and induſtrious part of the inhabitants, who are, without doubt, collectively conſidered, the moſt valuable part of the people. And the judge upon the bench muſt ſit and ſee

ſuch wicked practices, without having it in his power to give any relief to an unhappy ſubject, who is ſtripped, and his family beggared, to ſatisfy a voracious blood-ſucker; and all under pretence of equity. One ſingle regulation would at once put a ſtop to this whole complaint, viz. A law, by which in all caſes of proſecution about private concerns, if one of the parties choſe to ſubmit the cauſe to arbitration, the other ſhould be obliged to ſtand to the award. The moſt judicious and prudent ſett of men in the nation, I mean the merchants, find this the moſt amicable, equitable, and frugal manner of deciding diſputes about property, and generally uſe it. And it were to be wiſhed that it were univerſal; which it is to be hoped the abominable iniquity of law will at laſt bring about.

The antient maxim, that the rigour of the law, is the height of injuſtice, is undoubtedly true. And whoever is ready to take all advantages of his neighbour, which the law, ſtrained to its utmoſt ſtrictneſs, will give him, ſhews himſelf (ſo far from loving his neighbour as himſelf) to be of a diſpoſition to plunder his neighbour for his own advantage in the moſt iniquitous manner, if he could but at the ſame time keep himſelf ſafe; and that it is not the love of juſtice and of his neighbour, but fear of puniſhment, that reſtrains him from the moſt notorious violations of property by theft or robbery.

If

If by borrowing money, or buying goods upon credit, knowing one's ſelf to be in no condition to pay, while the perſon he deals with believes him fit to be truſted, if by ſuch means as theſe, one may as much injure his neighbour's eſtate as by open violence, or theft, it is evident, that all ſuch proceedings are highly unjuſt. Every man has a right to know the truth in all caſes which concern himſelf. And whoever conceals from his neighbour a truth, which if he had known, he would have acted another part than he did, is the cauſe of all the loſs he may ſuffer by ſuch tranſaction. Yet nothing is more common, than for traders to borrow large ſums a very few few days before their becoming inſolvent. In which, beſides the injuſtice, the abuſe of friendſhip and confidence greatly aggravates the iniquity.

It is lamentable to obſerve how little regard is too generally paid to ſuch promiſes as people think themſelves not legally liable to be compelled to the performance of. Breaking promiſes is violating ſacred truth. And with-holding from a perſon what one has abſolutely promiſed him, ſuppoſing it ſtill in his power to perform his promiſe, is depriving him of what he has a right to claim: which is in effect a violation of property. Eſpecially in the caſe of a dependence upon a promiſe given, by which the expectant is diſappointed, and greatly injured. This is direct injuſtice, falſhood, and cruelty. Nor does

the conſideration of an unexpected expence, which the fulfilling of the promiſe may occaſion, bring any excuſe for violating it. All that was to have been conſidered beforehand, and accounted upon, before you gave your promiſe. At the ſame time a generous man will quit his right to what has been promiſed him, when he finds, that the promiſer cannot, without conſiderable detriment, fulfil his engagement.

To with-hold a juſt debt, though the creditor ſhould not have it in his power to recover it by law, is equally unjuſt, as in the caſe of its being recoverable. The intention of the law of bankruptcy is to give unfortunate debtors an opportunity of doing juſtice to their creditors. Therefore he, who takes the advantage of his being cleared by the ſtatute of bankruptcy, and refuſes to make complete payment of his whole debts, when it comes afterwards to be in his power, is guilty of the ſame ſort of injuſtice as the thief. And to take advantage of ſanctuaries, or privileged places; or of the laws in favour of members of either houſe of parliament, to ſcreen one's ſelf, or others; or by any other means to evade, or aſſiſt others in evading, the payment of juſt debts, where it is in the debtor's power to make payment, is the very ſame ſpecies of iniquity as theft, with the aggravation of the abuſe of law, and the baſeneſs of taking an advantage of the weaker.

Nor

Nor is the abſolute refuſal of a juſt debt, only injuſtice; but even the delay of payment beyond a reaſonable time, if at all in one's power to make payment, is injurious and iniquitous. And all the prejudice ſuffered by the creditor, by loſs of intereſt of money, or by inconveniences in his affairs, through want of what he has a juſt title to, is juſtly to be laid to the charge of the debtor.

All breach of truſt, whether thro' careleſs neglect or voluntary embezzling of what is committed to one's care, in the capacity of an executor of the will of the dead, of an aſſignee, ſteward, factor, deputy; all proceedings of this kind, which are different from the conduct one would purſue in the management of his own concerns, or might in reaſon expect another to do for him, are deviations from rectitude, and the great rule of loving our neighbour with the ſame meaſure of affection as ourſelves.

In commerce and traffic, all advantages taken by dealers, againſt one another, beyond what the one, if he were in the other's place, would think juſt and reaſonable; are iniquitous. Of this kind are all deceits in goods, as putting them off for ſomewhat better than they are, whether that be done by concealing their real faults, or by giving them counterfeit advantages. Over-rating of commodities; that is, ſelling them at ſuch a price, as will yield an exorbitant profit to the ſeller, to the prejudice of the buyer, which ſhews in a very bad light all monopolies, eſpecially of ſuch articles of

commerce as are neceſſary in trade, or in life. All advantages taken by traders poſſeſſed of large capitals, to the hurt of perſons in narrower circumſtances. All advantages taken by the knowing, againſt the ignorant. Advantages taken by the buyer againſt the ſeller, whether of his ignorance or neceſſity. And thoſe moſt flagrant iniquities of falſe weights, meaſures, or coins; with whatever elſe in general, may be the means of transferring to one perſon the property of another in any manner, which he who is the gainer would think an injuſtice and hardſhip, if he were in the caſe of the loſer; all ſuch arts of commerce are iniquitous and unjuſtifiable.

Reader, if thou art wiſe, thou wilt ſtop here, and examine thy heart, and thy life. If thou haſt ever deſired, or effected, the prejudice of thy neighbour in his property, whether by means of power or craft, as thou loveſt thy ſoul, do not delay one day to repent, and reform thy fault, and to make ample reſtitution, to the injured perſon, to his heirs, or if theſe cannot be found, to the poor. If thou goeſt down to the grave loaded with the ſpoils of injuſtice, they will ſink thy ſoul to the bottomleſs pit. For the Judge of the world is of infinite purity and juſtice; and will ſhew no mercy to the impenitent offender againſt unchangeable and eternal rectitude.

Men being drawn to make encroachments upon the property of others, through avarice; it is evidently the duty of every man to look into his

own

own heart, and find out whether the love of riches takes up too much room in it. And if he finds, what I doubt moſt men will find, that he loves riches better than he does his neighbour, that he has a greater deſire to gain wealth than to be of ſervice to his fellow-creatures, it is his undoubted duty to conquer the ſordid paſſion, and ſtrengthen the generous one. To this purpoſe it will be his wiſdom to ſet himſelf in earneſt to deep conſideration on the evil of avarice, and the excellence of juſtice; to earneſt prayer to heaven for aſſiſtance in the conqueſt of this vicious diſpoſition; and to avoid extravagance and profuſion, which are often the cauſe of the moſt rapacious and inſatiable avarice.

Every man has a right to be thought and ſpoken of according to his real character. Conſequently, whoever, by any means, direct or indirect, is the occaſion of his neighbour's being worſe thought, or ſpoken of, than he deſerves, is guilty of injuring his neighbour; and all injurious treatment of a fellow-creature is contrary to rectitude, and inconſiſtent with the love we ought to have for our neighbour, which ought to be equal to that with which one loves himſelf.

The moſt atrocious injury againſt our neighbour's reputation is, falſe witneſs before a judge. The laws of ſeveral nations have condemned the guilty of this crime to ſuffer the ſame puniſhment, to which the law expoſed the perſon ſworn againſt.

But

But I know no puniſhment too ſevere for a crime of ſo black a nature, and which draws along with it ſuch horrid conſequences. To take the eternal God of truth to witneſs to a known falſhood; to defeat the very intention of an oath, which is often the only poſſible means for the diſcovery of truth; to render all human teſtimony ſuſpicious; to ſtop the courſe of juſtice, and open a door to all manner of iniquity and violence; to blaſt the character of an innocent perſon in the moſt public manner, and in the manner the moſt effectual for ruining it, as being the moſt likely to gain belief to his prejudice; to violate his property, perhaps to reduce himſelf and his family to beggary; or to be the cauſe of paſſing upon him a ſentence of death for what he never was capable of committing; to take a falſe oath againſt a perſon before a court, is to be guilty of ſuch black and complicated crimes as theſe. And for this our law inflicts a puniſhment, which a little money given the conſtables makes almoſt no puniſhment.

To ſpread a falſe report againſt any perſon, is contrary to the love we ought to have for our neighbour, and to juſtice, whether it be known to be ſuch, or invented for the purpoſe by the publiſher, or whether it be a mere ſurmiſe or ſuſpicion. To invent a lye, or propagate a known falſhood, to the prejudice of any perſon's character, is taking up the office of Satan himſelf, who is ſtyled in Scripture the Accuſer. But, that even

inſinuations, and whiſpers, or nods and ſhrugs, by which an innocent character may be blaſted or ruined, are wicked and cruel, every man's conſcience will tell him, if he will put it to himſelf how he ſhould like to be ſo uſed, or reflect upon the uneaſineſs it gave him, if ever he ſuffered in the ſame manner.

If by ſneering and ridicule, upon an innocent infirmity, a perſon may be laughed out of the reſpect and eſteem, which every worthy character deſerves, it is evident, that ſuch wantonly miſchievous mirth is highly unjuſtifiable.

The cruelty of all practices, which tend to leſſen the reputation of an innocent perſon, appears plainly from the value of reputation; which is always dear to great and worthy minds; and the loſs of which is in ſome caſes peculiar fatal. The characters of a clergyman, a governor of youth, a trader, or a virgin, are more delicate than thoſe of other perſons. And whoever is capable of wantonly attacking ſuch characters, muſt be wholly void of ſentiment for his fellow-creatures.

There is a peculiarity in the vice we are now treating of, which renders is more atrocious, than that of invading our neighbour's property. It is, that often the injured perſon is robbed of what is to him of ineſtimable worth, and the cruel ſpoiler not enriched by the rapine. For the defamer commonly reaps neither profit, honour, nor pleaſure, unleſs the indulgence of malice can be

be called a pleaſure, which if it is, Satan muſt be a very happy being.

The defamer is as much more infamous than the open railer, as the dark aſſaſſin is more to be dreaded than the fair challenger. And the defamer and aſſaſſin reſemble one another, in that the wounds which both give, prove often incurable.

Reader, if thou makeſt it thy practice to divert thyſelf with miſchief, or to ſtrive to build thyſelf an ill-founded reputation upon the ruins of thy neighbour's, or think'ſt, by undermining him, to get thyſelf into the advantages he now enjoys; remember I have told thee there will be no triumph hereafter, when thou comeſt to be judged for thy idle words. The ill-gotten advantages, thou mayſt reap from thy baſe treachery to thy brother, if thou ſhouldſt be ſucceſsful, which is ſeldom the caſe, will bring a curſe along with them, a canker worm, that will deſtroy both them and thee. And take notice, no malicious, envious, or cruel diſpoſition will find any admittance into the ſeats of future bliſs. If thou think'ſt to be hereafter a companion of angels and ſpirits of good men, reſolve in time to form thy mind to univerſal benevolence. Learn to conſider even the abandoned offender as ſtill a human creature, the production of the ſame goodneſs which made thyſelf; as not yet out of the reach of the Divine grace, and therefore not to be given up as abſolutely irrecoverable, and, if recoverable, again

a fit

a fit object for thy love; for thy Maker's love. Do not therefore dare in thy mind to hate or deſpiſe, nor in thy converſation to reflect, but with pity and humanity, upon even the real vices of thy fellow-creature, much leſs to blacken his unſpotted reputation. The day will come, when thou ſhalt ſtand before the ſame judgment ſeat with him. He is not thy creature, but God's, Leave him to God. Is a fellow-creature guilty of a fault? So art thou. It is no part of thy duty to enquire into his faults, or to lay them open to others, unleſs to prevent the miſchief thou knoweſt he is preparing to do another. If thou art not ſure of a ſuperior good to be gained by diſcovering thy neighbour's faults, why ſhouldſt thou take upon thee the character of an informer? If thy neighbour is really guilty, why ſhouldſt thou be ambitious of the office of an executioner, or delight in laſhing offenders? If thou haſt been ſo wicked as baſely to ſtab the reputation of thy innocent fellow-creature, I charge thee, as thou loveſt thy ſoul, that thou endeavour to heal up the wound thou haſt made. Take care, that every ſingle perſon, be the number ever ſo great, whoſe ear thou haſt abuſed, be ſet right with reſpect to the character of the innocent. If thoſe, whoſe minds thou haſt poiſoned, have communicated the venom to others; be ſure to trace the wicked lye, the ſpawn of thy own foul tongue, thro' all its doublings, and deſtroy it, that it may ſpread its deadly influence no farther. Take

ſhame

ſhame to thyſelf, and do juſtice to innocence. Thou hadſt better ſuffer ſhame now, than hereafter before God, angels, and men.

It is plainly contrary to the benevolent affection we ought to have for our fellow-creature, to put him to any pain or diſtreſs of body, as by beating, wounding, or maiming, unleſs in ſelf-defence, when unjuſtly attacked; in lawful war; or in caſe of his having deſerved corporal correction, and if we are authoriſed by a juſt law to inflict, or cauſe it to be inflicted upon him.

If it be contrary to the affection we ought to have for our neighbour, to put him to bodily pain needleſsly, or unjuſtly, it is much more ſo, to deprive him of life, unleſs he has forfeited it according to law.

This injury is ſo much the more atrocious, as it is irreparable. And it ſeems to me very much to be doubted, whether human authority ought in reaſon to be extended to the pardon of the murder of the innocent. Scripture is expreſs, "that he who ſheds man's blood, by man ſhall "his blood be ſhed."

There ſeems to be in this crime ſomewhat peculiarly offenſive to heaven, in that the Divine providence does ſo often, by moſt ſtriking and wonderful interpoſitions, bring the authors of it to light in a manner different from what happens in other caſes. For, of the numbers, who loſe their lives by violence, it is remarkable that there are few inſtances of the murderer's eſcaping. That

in ſo great and wicked a city as *London*, for example, there ſhonld not every year be many people miſſing, being made away with ſecretly, and the authors of their death never found; is very remarkable. We find that often the ſagacity of dogs, and other animals, and even inanimate things, have been the occaſion of bringing this foul crime to light. But the moſt common means of the diſcovery of bloody deeds has been conſcience, which, acting the part of a torturer, has forced the tongue, through extremity of anguiſh, to diſcloſe the ſecret, which no other but itſelf could bring to light.

It being by pride and paſſion, that men are incited to break looſe upon one another in acts of violence, it is plain, that the beſt method of preventing our falling into them is, by ſubduing thoſe fatal paſſions, which tranſport us beyond the power and uſe of reaſon. And if nothing tends more to inflame every paſſion, than the uſe of ſtrong liquors, how cautious ought we to be of indulging the maddening draught, which may drive us upon extravagancies, we could not in our cooler hours believe ourſelves capable of? Cruelty, even to the brute creation, is altogether unjuſtifiable, much more to our fellow-creatures. Nor can any thinking perſon believe it poſſible, that a mind diſpoſed to barbarity, or inſenſible of the miſeries of our fellow-beings, can be at all fit for a future ſtate, in which goodneſs is to prevail.

A wiſe

A wiſe man will dread the beginning of quarrels. For no one knows where a quarrel, once begun, may end. None of us knows how much of the evil ſpirit is either in himſelf or in his adverſary. And he, who begins, is in conſcience anſwerable for all the conſequences. Nor was there ever a falling out without folly, at leaſt on one ſide, if not on both. Were one ſure the worſt that was to happen would be the ruffling of his own or his neighbour's temper, or the diſcompoſing of their ſpirits, even that cannot be without guilt. And is an empire of conſequence enough to make any thinking man offend God, and endanger his or his neighbour's ſoul? Tremble, reader, at the thought of being ſuddenly ſnatched away (as nothing is more common than ſudden death) and ſent into the world of ſpirits hot from a conteſt with a fellow-creature, and fellow-chriſtian.

Hurting our neighbour's health by tempting him to be guilty of intemperance, is as really contrary to that affection we ought to have for him, as wounding, or poyſoning him. It is no more an alleviation of the guilt of ſeducing him into debauchery, that it may not cut him off in leſs than ſeveral years (which is likewiſe more than can be certainly affirmed) than it is leſs murder to poyſon in the *Italian* manner, than with a doſe of arſenick. But to lead a fellow-creature into a courſe of debauchery is, as above obſerved,

obſerved, poyſoning both ſoul and body at once.

To grieve, afflict, or terrify a fellow-creature needleſsly, or unjuſtly, is injuring him as to his ſoul. And the anguiſh of the mind being more ſeverely felt, than bodily pain, the inflicting the former upon an innocent perſon is a greater act of cruelty. It is therefore ſhocking to think how one half of mankind ſport with the anguiſh of the other. How little they make the caſe of their fellow-creatures their own, or conſider what they muſt ſuffer from their wicked aſperſions, miſrepreſentations, and oppreſſive and injurious treatment; which bring a pain proportioned to the ſenſibility of the ſufferer. And every one knows, that the delicacy of ſome minds renders them as different from others, as the temper of the lamb is meeker than that of the tiger.

But the moſt direct injury againſt the ſpiritual part of our fellow-creature is, leading him into vice; whether that be done by means of ſolicitation; by artfully impoſing on his judgment; by powerful compulſion; or by prevailing example.

Some tempers are ſo impotently ductile, that they can refuſe nothing to repeated ſolicitation. Whoever takes the advantage of ſuch perſons, is guilty of the loweſt baſeneſs. Yet nothing is more common, than for the debauched part of our ſex to ſhew their heroiſm by a poor triumph over weak, eaſy, thoughtleſs woman; no-

thing more frequent, than to hear them boaſt of the ruin of that virtue, of which it ought to be their pride to be the defenders. "Poor fool! "ſhe loved me, and therefore could refuſe me "nothing." Baſe coward! Doſt thou boaſt thy conqueſt over one, who, by thy own confeſſion, was diſabled for reſiſtance, diſabled by her affection for thy worthleſs ſelf? Does affection deſerve ſuch a return? Is ſuperior underſtanding, or rather deeper craft, to be uſed againſt thoughtleſs ſimplicity; and its ſhameful ſucceſs to be boaſted of? Doſt thou pride thyſelf, that thou haſt had art enough to decoy the harmleſs lamb to thy hand, that thou mightſt ſhed its blood?

To call good evil, and evil good, is in Scripture ſtigmatized with a curſe. And to put out the bodily eyes is not ſo great an injury, as to miſlead, or extinguiſh the underſtanding, and impoſe upon the judgment in matters of right and wrong. Whoever is guilty of this inhuman and diabolical wickedneſs, may in reaſon expect to have the ſoul, he has been the ruin of, required hereafter at his hands.

I am very ſuſpicious, that many perſons in eminent ſtations have very little notion of their being highly criminal in the ſight of God, in ſetting a bad example before the reſt of mankind. No perſon, who thinks at all, can doubt, whether it is juſtifiable to adviſe, or force others to be guilty of vice. But if there is a way incomparably more effectual and alluring, by which

people

people are more powerfully drawn into wickedneſs; ſurely that is more miſchievous and hurtful, and ought moſt carefully to be avoided.

Of all tyranny, none is ſo inhuman, as where men uſe their power over others, to force them into wickedneſs. The bloody perſecutor, who uſes threats and puniſhments, priſons, racks, and fires, to compel the unhappy ſufferer to make ſhipwreck of faith, and give up truth and a good conſcience; the corrupt miniſter, or candidate, who bullies the unhappy dependent into the perjured vote; theſe, and ſuch like, are in the way toward being qualified for becoming furies and fiends in the lower regions. For who is ſo fit for the place of a tormentor, to ſtand among evil ſpirits, and plunge the emerging ſouls deeper in hell-flames, than he, who, on earth, made it his infernal employment, to thruſt his fellow-creatures into thoſe ways, which lead down to the chambers of deſtruction?

Reader, if thou haſt ever been the cauſe of a fellow-creature's guilt; if thou haſt, by force or art, betrayed a wretched ſoul into vice, and acted the part of an agent of Satan; I charge thee on thy ſoul, put not off thy repentance for an hour. Prevent, if poſſible, the final ruin thy curſed arts tend to bring upon a human creature. Endeavour to open the eyes, which thou haſt cloſed; to enlighten the underſtanding thou haſt blinded; and to lead again into the right way the feet, thou haſt taught to wander from it. If thou wilt

go to deſtruction, why ſhouldſt thou drag others with thee? If thy ambition prompts thee to ruin thy own ſoul, ſpare that of thy poor fellow-creature, who has no concern with thy ſchemes. Muſt thy brother have a place in the infernal regions, to get thee a place at court? Take back the damning bribe; prevent the perjured vote: think how thou wilt bear the eternal howlings of a ſpirit by thy temptations ſunk to irrecoverable perdition.

Beſides the general duty of benevolence to all, who partake of the ſame common nature, which is indiſpenſably neceſſary in the nature of things toward the very being of ſociety, in the preſent ſtate, and for fitting us for entering into a more extenſive ſociety hereafter; beſides the general benevolence we owe to all our fellow-creatures, it is evident, that we owe particular duties to particular perſons, according to the relations and connexions we have with them. This propriety is founded in the nature of things*, and is ſelf-evident. It is as plain, that reverence to ſuperiors, for example, is proper, as that all the angles of a plain triangle are equal to two right ones. It is as evident, that the contempt of one really ſuperior to us, would be wrong, as that it would be wrong to ſay that twice two are equal to fifty.

* See the firſt Section of this third book.

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The firſt, and moſt important of all relative ſocial duties, is that which we owe to our country. That we ought to ſtudy the intereſt of our country, is plain from conſidering, that the love of our families, and even ſelf-love, cannot be purſued, or eſtabliſhed, on any rational footing, but what will extend to that of our country (for it is impoſſible for all families and individuals to be happy in a ruined country) and from conſidering, that, if no perſon loved his country, but every individual was indifferent about its intereſt, no country could ſubſiſt; but the world muſt quickly come to an end.

The virtue of patriotiſm is moſt indiſpenſable in perſons in high ſtations, whoſe rank gives them an opportunity of being of important ſervice to the public intereſt. Theſe ought to conſider themſelves as general protectors and fathers, to whoſe care the reſt of mankind are by Divine providence committed; and ought to tremble at the thought of betraying ſo awful a truſt. And the intereſt of a country conſiſts briefly in its being properly ſecured againſt enemies; in its being governed by good laws, duly executed; in its being ſecured in its liberties, civil and religious, the boundaries of which laſt cannot be too ample, though the former may eaſily be extended to licentiouſneſs, as is at preſent moſt flagrantly the caſe in *England*; in its being kept under ſuch a police, and ſuch regulations, as may tend to promote health, virtue, public and pri-

vate, and real religion; in a due encouragement of commerce, agriculture, manufactures, learning and arts. Whatever a nation can be the better for the encouragement of, or the worſe if diſcouraged, is the province of governors to be perfect maſters of, and to ſee effectual means uſed for carrying into execution every ſalutary ſcheme. With reſpect to the health of a people, for example, the duty of governors is not only to take all poſſible care to prevent the importation of infections from foreign parts, but that the people have it not in their power by the uſe of unwholſome proviſions of any kind to hurt their conſtitutions, to the enfeebling and enervating of the race, as is moſt atrociouſly and extenſively the caſe at preſent in *England*, by means of too low-priced ſpirituous liquors. Again, it is unqueſtionably the duty of governors to ſee to it, that there be no encouragement given to idleneſs, or debauchery; but that, on the contrary, all vices hurtful to ſociety be liable to every kind of diſcouragement. That there be ſomething found for every creature to do, who has any meaſure of health or ſtrength, that all excuſe for idleneſs may be removed, and the crime of doing nothing be ſeverely puniſhable. That lewdneſs and proſtitution be at leaſt driven from appearing in public without ſhame or reſtraint, to the corrupting of the youth of a nation. That marriage, the main ſupport of ſtates, be in the moſt effectual manner encouraged, and celibacy, after

mature age (one of the worſt offences againſt our country) ſubjected to every inconvenience and burden. That all poſſible encouragement be given to every perſon who enriches or adorns his country by any valuable diſcovery, or noble production, in arts, or ſciences, and particularly to thoſe, whoſe literary labours tend to the advancement of public and private virtue, and religion. Whatever tends to the increaſe of luxury and extravagance ought to be laid under ſevere reſtraints, and heavy taxes; as in general all taxes ought to fall on the luxury and ſuperfluity of life, while induſtry and frugality eſcape free.

To underſtand thoroughly all theſe particulars, and to endeavour to promote and improve them, is the proper calling of perſons of rank and weight in a nation. And whoever makes no other advantage of a high ſtation, than to plunder his country to gratify his avarice, to raiſe himſelf and his creatures to affluence, or to indulge ſenſuality, is unworthy of the honourable rank he holds; is a treacherous betrayer of his ſacred truſt, and inſtead of honour deſerves the contempt of all men of virtue and public ſpirit. For the true dignity of high life conſiſts in a ſuperior élevation of mind; more extenſive improvements in knowledge; a greater contempt of whatever is unworthy; a more enlarged benevolence to mankind; a more uncorrupted integrity; and a more ſublime way of thinking, ſpeaking, and acting, than is to be ſeen in other men.

Whoever is not in theſe reſpects ſuperior to the reſt of mankind, may be richer, but can with no propriety of ſpeech be ſaid to be greater, than others. For it is not the dreſs, the ſtation, or the fortune, but the mind, that is the man. Therefore a little mind makes a mean man; a great mind a great man.

Though it is chiefly by the great, that the intereſt of a nation is to be conſulted and ſupported, it is certain, that every perſon has it in his power to ſerve his country leſs or more. Whoever plants a tree, incloſes a field, builds a houſe, is the cauſe of a child's being brought into the world, and educated for becoming a valuable member of ſociety, whoever, in ſhort, fills a uſeful place in life, ſerves his country more than five hundred of thoſe idle recluſes, and holy drones, with which popiſh countries ſwarm. Eſpecially, men of abilities, in the moſt private ſtations, are capable of ſerving their country, if not by action, yet by ſuggeſting uſeful hints to thoſe, whoſe ſtations give them an opportunity of action; and of improving, by their converſation and writings, the minds and manners of their countrymen.

The true love of our country will ſhew itſelf in our preferring the public to our own private intereſt, wherever they come in competition. In a conſcientious obedience to the laws, though to our own particular diſadvantage. In a proper reverence to our governors, eſpecially the ſupreme;

preme; even in caſes where we do not ſee enough (as how ſhould perſons in private ſtations?) to be able to explain to ourſelves, or others, the wiſdom of all their meaſures.

It is with a thorough concern, I cannot help remarking here, that the very contrary of all this ſeems to be the rule, by which the people of *England* conduct themſelves in the preſent age. Is it not notorious, that the virtue of public ſpirit is become little elſe than a ſubject of ridicule? That venality has poiſoned all ranks, from the bribed voter in a country-borough, upwards to the candidate for a place in the great aſſembly of the nation? The enormous expences beſtowed, and horrible perjury committed, in carrying elections; with the numerous controverted elections which are from time to time the ſubject of examination before the houſe; and the variety of regulations found neceſſary to be made for reſtraining bribery and corruption (though the moſt effectual regulation, I mean, of voting in all caſes by ballot, which the wiſe ſtates of antiquity found neceſſary, has not been tried) all this ſhews too flagrantly, to what a fatal extent this ruinous and deſtructive miſchief reaches. Nor is there any hope of an effectual cure for the evil, while ſuch a pernicious maxim in politics as the following is held, I had almoſt ſaid, eſtabliſhed; That it is lawful to bribe for the good of the nation (as they very improperly ſpeak) in order to be on even terms with the enemies of

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the nation. The Jacobite, or Tory party (ſay our politicians) will get themſelves elected into parliament by bribery: Why muſt not the gentlemen of revolution-principles endeavour to defeat them by the ſame means? To expoſe this fatal doctrine, which is ſometimes defended by very well-meaning men, let it be conſidered, firſt, that Jacobitiſm, or Toryiſm, in the ſouthern part of the nation is in fact little more than another word for the party who are out, and would be in. There are few men of the leaſt ſenſe, and knowledge of the world, on this ſide the *Highlands* of *Scotland*, who do in ſober earneſt wiſh to ſee a papiſt on the *Britiſh* throne. Slavery, civil and religious, will not go down with thoſe who have long enjoyed the ſweets of liberty. And if Jacobitiſm and Toryiſm be little more than a bugbear, and the virtue of a people, the only ſure foundation of government and national happineſs, is to be corrupted and ruined by a contention between two ſetts of men, either of which might be as likely to purſue the intereſt of the nation as the other, it is plain, that both ſides are guilty; the pretended Whigs, who are in, and the pretended Tories, who are out; it being equally contrary to virtue, and to the laws of the land, to bribe for one ſide as for another. But, ſuppoſing the caſe to be exactly as firſt put, and that all, who pretend to be diſaffected, were really ſo in their hearts; and that their inclination, and their power, to ſubvert the conſtitution,

tion, were much greater than they are; it is evident, that to do a positive evil, that an uncertain good may come, is directly contrary both to reason and religion. For the real friends of liberty to oppose the enemies of our country, by bribery and corruption, is directly iniquitous and impious. For, to proceed in that manner is to confound the immutable nature of right and wrong, to throw down the sacred barriers, established by Divine authority for guarding the awful laws of virtue from violation, which are to be held in the utmost reverence, and on no account to be broke through, if not only a kingdom should suffer a revolution; but if the solar system, or whole visible universe, were to go to wreck. For one act of perjury, or other gross deviation from virtue, is more opposite to the Divine nature, and oeconomy of the world, than the extinction of a thousand suns, with the destruction of all their planets. But besides all this, what can be more absurd, than to talk of supporting a state by vice, the very means which have proved the ruin of all the states that ever have sunk; and without which no state could be brought to ruin? Alas, does it become such poor shortsighted creatures as we are, to project schemes for ourselves, to violate the eternal laws of virtue, in order, forsooth, to put it in the power of Divine providence to do what it could not without our assistance? Can any politician think, that promoting bribery or perjury are likely to gain us the

the Divine protection? or that the kingdom can ſtand independent of the Divine protection? or that it can ſtand without virtue? Theſe are deplorable expedients. Like opiates in an acute diſtemper, they lull things into peace for a ſhort time, while they ſlowly, but ſurely, wear out the ſtrength and vitals of the conſtitution.——— O virtue! O my country!

Is it not alſo notorious, that the bulk of our laws, through the criminal negligence, or timidity, of thoſe, in whoſe hands the executive power is lodged, and through the licentiouſneſs of the people, who ſeem to think it the privilege of free-born *Engliſhmen* to break their own laws, are, inſtead of a neceſſary reſtraint, become a mere bugbear? Above all things, that lawmakers are ſometimes law-breakers, is a ſhocking accuſation to be laid againſt perſons in eminent ſtations. That the ſame perſons in their legiſlative capacity ſhould concur to the making of regulations for the ſuppreſſion of the deſtructive practices of ſmuggling, gaming, unduly influencing elections, and the like, and in their private capacity ſhould be the promoters of thoſe ruinous vices; is doing what they can to turn government into a farce, and reduce a nation to a ſtate of anarchy.

Is it not monſtrous, that, by means of the madneſs and inſolence of party, ſuch a degree of arrogant and ſeditious virulence is worked up in the ſpirits of the people, that the loweſt of the mob

mob thinks himſelf wiſe enough to take to taſk the governors of the ſtate, and aſſumes the liberty, over his cups, to rail at the legiſlators of his country; by which means, the beſt conſtitutioned kingdom upon earth ſeems haſtening to a ſtate of confuſion; while the people's reverence for lawful authority, whereby obedience ſubſiſts, is deſtroyed, the meaſures of government are embarraſſed; and our governors diſcouraged from attempting to alter, or new-model any thing, that may be amiſs; ſince nothing can be done without clamour and diſturbance, and laws, when enacted, are, through the perverſeneſs of the people, of very little efficacy.

Theſe are not the effects of the love of our country. Nor the infamous practice of ſmuggling, and other mean arts, by which the laws for raiſing a revenue for defraying the neceſſary expences of government, are evaded. Yet it is notorious, that the avowed principle of numbers of perſons in trade, is, That all is well got, that is got by cheating the king, as they abſurdly talk. For defrauding the public revenue is in effect defrauding the people, who pay it, and making it neceſſary for the government to lay additional taxes, and to clog and incumber trade and induſtry, to make up the deficiencies occaſioned by the depredations of a ſett of lawleſs people, the plague and ruin of fair traders. It is amazing, that rational creatures can contrive ſo effectually to blind their reaſon, and ſtupify their conſcience,

conſcience, as to bring themſelves to argue, that though it is confeſſedly unjuſtifiable and wicked in a ſon to diſobey his parent, yet there is no harm in diſobeying that authority, which is higher than the parental, I mean, that of the law of the land; that, though it is wrong to cheat or lye, there is no harm in taking a falſe oath at the cuſtom-houſe, by which the guilt of perjury is incurred; the revenue, or more properly the nation, robbed; and the fair trader injured.

People may deceive themſelves, as they pleaſe: But there is hardly any worſe ſpecies of vice, than diſobedience and inſolence to ſupreme lawful authority. Nor will any perſon be fit for a future ſtate of peace, regularity, and perfect obedience to the univerſal Governor (without which there can be no happineſs) who has in this ſtate habituated himſelf to lawleſs oppoſition and contempt of government.

To raiſe an oppoſition or rebellion in a country againſt the ſupreme authority, except upon moſt powerful cauſes and motives, is a crime of as horrid and complicated a kind as any to which human wickedneſs is capable of proceeding. For the conſequences of a general diſturbance in a ſtate, are the perpetration of all kinds of iniquity. And where ſo dreadful a conſequence is foreſeen, it is evident, nothing leſs than the prevention of a total ſubverſion of rights and privileges, civil and religious, of which the laſt is much the moſt

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important, is a ſufficient plea for diſturbing the general peace.

This was confeſſedly the caſe at the Revolution in 1688. But thoſe men, who delight in miſrepreſenting a government, and making them odious and vile in the eyes of the people, and do all they can to thwart and embarraſs their meaſures, merely becauſe themſelves have no ſhare in the emoluments of place and power, are the peſts of ſociety.

One of the greateſt curſes of our nation, and of liberty in general, is that of our unhappy diviſions and parties in religion and politics. As for the firſt, it is a ſubject of too ſerious and important a nature to be made a mere badge of faction, or a bone of contention. The deſign of religion is to improve and dignify our natures, to correct our errors in judgment, and to regulate our lives. And whoever applies it as a tool of ſtate, as an artifice for aggrandizing himſelf, or his friends, and a cloke to conceal his ſecular views, is guilty of proſtituting the moſt ſacred thing in the world, to the vileſt uſes. As for political parties, it is notorious, that thoſe who aſſume to themſelves the moſt ſplendid titles of being on the patriot ſide, or country-intereſt, and againſt the court, as their cant is, generally make a clamour for pretended liberty, and the good of their country, only to have their mouths ſtopped with a place or a penſion; and that, on the other hand, thoſe who ſtand up in defence of

of all the meaſures of thoſe in power, without diſtinction, only do ſo with a view to get, or to keep ſome emolument. As it is inconceivable that either one or the other party ſhould be conſtantly in the right, or invariably in the wrong, you may conclude, that whoever inclines univerſally for, or againſt either ſide, without ever altering his opinion, is either a man of very mean abilities, or has ſome indirect ſcheme in view. The trimmer, who gives his vote ſometimes with one ſide, ſometimes with the other, according to the view he has of the conſequences, is the only man of integrity. And I cannot help adviſing my readers to look upon all parties, and all who make either religion or politics a party-affair, in the ſame light, and to keep clear of all ſides alike; making it their buſineſs to conſult the real good of their country, and the real welfare of their ſouls, without any eye to the ſordid gains of corruption, or any deſire to fight the battles of either party.

To conclude, our duty to our country comprehends all the relative duties. And we are to ſacrifice private intereſt, family, and life itſelf to it, when called upon; and are to obey its laws in all caſes where they do not claſh with the only ſuperior authority in the univerſe, I mean, the Divine.

Next under the authority of national government, is the parental. The propriety and neceſſity of ſubmiſſion to parents appears from conſidering,

ſidering, that it is evidently neceſſary, that ſome perſon, or perſons, ſhould undertake the care of children in the helpleſs time of life; and that none are ſo proper as the parents. In conſequence of this, it is neceſſary that children, before they come to the uſe of reaſon, be governed by authority, and there is none ſo natural as that of parents; it is therefore their part to return the reciprocal duties of love, gratitude, reverence, and obedience to thoſe who have taken care of them, when no one elſe would undertake that office. And it being once made the appointed courſe and order of things, the law of filial duty is not to be broke through by the children on account of a failure in the parents in diſcharging their duty; nor contrariwiſe, are parents to give up the care of their children, though they ſhould turn out untowardly. Obedience to parents extends to all things that are conſiſtent with the laws of our country, and of God, both which authorities are ſuperior to that of parents.

The duty of parents to their children is briefly to take care that proper proviſion be made for their bodily intereſt, by food, cloathing, and education, and more eſpecially for that of their minds, by forming them, from the earlieſt years, to virtue and religion.

The duty of ſpiritual paſtors to their people, is to do whatever is in their power for the good of the ſouls committed to their charge, by preaching, catechiſing, counſelling, or writing. How-

ever improper it may be thought for a layman to enlarge upon this relative duty, it cannot be improper to refer to one, from whom directions on this head will come with unexceptionable authority, I mean the apoſtle *Paul* in his Epiſtles to *Timothy*. The duty of people to their paſtors, is to ſhew them a great deal more reverence and gratitude, than is commonly done in *England*.

The duty of inſtructors of youth is briefly, to fill the place of parents in forming thoſe conſigned to their care by the parents, to uſefulneſs in life, and happineſs hereafter. The duty of young perſons to their governors and teachers is obedience, and diligence in endeavouring to improve themſelves, while under their care, and gratitude and love to thoſe, by whoſe faithful diligence they had the opportunity of becoming wiſe and good men. And the duty of gratitude to parents and teachers on this account will be binding upon thoſe who have been the objects of their care, not only for life, but to eternity.

The duty of maſters to ſervants, is to pay them according to engagement; to treat them as fellow-creatures, though in an inferior ſtation; and to take care, that they have opportunities of knowing their duty, and means of happineſs. That of ſervants to maſters is faithfulneſs, diligence, and obedience in all lawful caſes.

The duty of huſbands to wives, is the tendereſt love, and warmeſt deſire of their happineſs in life, and to eternity. That of wives to huſbands,

bands, beſides reciprocal love, takes in obedience in all lawful things. This ariſes from the conſideration of the priority of creation, and ſuperior dignity of the male-ſex, to which nature has given the greater ſtrength of mind and body, and therefore fitted them for authority. But as, on one hand, it is not the part of a good wife to conteſt the authority of her huſband, ſo neither is it of a good huſband to ſtand up for the privilege of his ſex, while he ſhews little of the tenderneſs which is due to the weaker. This is, in ſhort, a ſtring never to be touched, for it always introduces diſcord, and interrupts the matrimonial harmony.

Love is the fulfilling of the whole duty mutually owing by collateral relations, as brothers, ſiſters, and the like. And ſuch perſons may eaſily know whether they do their duty to one another, by conſidering how people behave to thoſe they really love.

In friendſhip, of which I have treated in the firſt book, the duties are mutual love, fidelity, ſecrecy, and a deſire of promoting one another's happineſs both ſpiritual and temporal. Virtue is the only foundation of friendſhip. The commerce of the wicked is rather to be called a combination or conſpiracy againſt mankind, than friendſhip.

The duty of the rich to the poor, is feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, viſiting the ſick, and in general, ſupplying the wants of the

neceſſitous. Thoſe, to whom the Divine providence has been diſtinguiſhingly bountiful, are to conſider themſelves as ſtewards of the good gifts of heaven, which they are not to laviſh away upon their own extravagant luſts, but to diſtribute to their diſtreſſed brethren. Nor ought they to think of this as an act of generoſity, or almoſt of ſupererogation, as many ſeem, by their oſtentatious way of giving charity, to do. It is not what they may do, or let alone. It is not to be carried to what length they pleaſe, and no farther. They are expected to give all they can give; and then to think they have done only what they ought. Since to do leſs, if we will take our Saviour's own word for it, is a neglect which will exclude from future bliſs. There is indeed great prudence to be uſed, that a judicious choice of objects may be made, and that the charity given may not prove a prejudice, inſtead of an advantage. If what is given ſerves to ſupport in idleneſs and debauchery, it had much better be with-held. Care is alſo to be taken, that our charity be not given for faſhion, oſtentation, or any other view, but obedience to God, and benevolence to our fellow creatures. In as far as any other conſideration has influence, in ſo far the real excellence of ſuch good works is leſſened in the ſight of Him, who ſearches the heart.

The duty of the poor, is gratitude to their benefactors; and induſtry, in endeavouring as much

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as they can, to lighten the burden of their own ſupport to thoſe who contribute to it.

Propriety and rectitude require, that the learned and wiſe uſe their endeavours to inſtruct and adviſe the ignorant and unthinking. And in general, that every perſon employ his peculiar talent or advantage for the moſt extenſive uſefulneſs. It is with this view that ſuch remarkable differences are made in the gifts of mind and fortune, which different perſons ſhare. Theſe are parts of their reſpective trials; and they will be judged according to the uſe they have made of them.

Our duty to benefactors is evidently love and gratitude. Even to enemies we owe, according to the Chriſtian law, of which afterwards, forgiveneſs, and interceſſion with heaven for them, which alſo we are obliged to for all our fellow-creatures.

The rectitude or propriety of theſe ſeveral obligations being ſelf-evident, it would be only waſting time to take the pains to eſtabliſh it by arguments.

The infinitely wiſe Governor of the univerſe has placed us in this ſtate, and engaged us in ſuch a variety of connexions with, and relations to one another, on purpoſe to habituate us to a ſenſe of duty and love of obedience and regularity. The more duties we have to do in our preſent ſtate of diſcipline, the more occaſion we have for watchfulneſs, and diligence, and a due exer-

tion of every noble power of the mind. And the more practice we have of exerting our powers, the ſtronger they muſt grow; and the more we practiſe obedience, the more tractable and obedient we muſt naturally become; and to be obedient to the ſupreme Governor of the world, is the very perfection of every created nature. Again, the various connexions among mankind, and the different duties reſulting from them, naturally tend to work in us a ſettled, and extenſive benevolence for our fellow-beings, and to habituate us to think and act with tenderneſs, forbearance, and affection toward them. And it is evident, that this ſublime and godlike diſpoſition cannot be too much cultivated. We can never be in any ſtate, in which it will not be for our advantage, and for the advantage of all the other beings, with whom we may be connected, that we be diſpoſed to extenſive and unbounded benevolence for one another. It is obvious, that a happy ſociety, in which hatred and ill-will ſhould univerſally prevail, is an inconceivable and contradictory idea. Whatever may be the nature of the ſtates we may be hereafter deſigned for, it is evident, we ſhall be the fitter for them, for having cultivated in our minds an extenſive univerſal love of all other beings. But if we ſuppoſe, what ſeems agreeable to Scripture views, as well as to reaſon, that thoſe, who ſhall be found worthy of a future life, are to be raiſed to ſtations, not of indolence and inactivity, but of extenſive

extenſive uſefulneſs in the creation, ſuch as we ſuppoſe to be filled at preſent by angels, I mean, of guardians, and governors over beings of lower ranks, during their ſtate of trial and diſcipline; if this be a reaſonable ſuppoſition, it is plain, that the ſublime virtue of benevolence cannot be carried too far. And this ſets forth the Divine wiſdom in placing us in a ſtate, in which we have ſuch opportunities of being habituated to a diſpoſition ſo uſeful and neceſſary for all orders of rational beings throughout all periods of their exiſtence.

It will be the reader's wiſdom here carefully to examine his conduct, that he may know, whether he acts the part of a valuable and uſeful member of ſociety. If he has wrought into his ſoul a kind, a generous, and extenſive benevolence toward all his fellow-creatures, whether in high or low ſtations; whether rich or poor; whether foreigners, or countrymen; whether of his own religion, or any other; learned or unlearned; virtuous or vicious; friends or enemies; if he finds it recommendation enough to his regard and affection, that it is a fellow-creature who wants his aſſiſtance, a being produced by the ſame Almighty hand which created himſelf; if he earneſtly wiſhes, and is at all times ready, to promote the good of his fellow-creatures by all means in his power, by his riches, his advice, his intereſt, his labour, at any time, ſeaſonable or unſeaſonable, in a way agreeable to his own

particular temper and inclination, or in a manner that may be leſs ſuitable to it; if he finds himſelf ready with the open arms of forgiveneſs to receive his enemy, the moment he appears diſpoſed to repentance and reconciliation; if he finds, that it would be a pleaſure to him to do good to thoſe who have injured him, though his goodneſs ſhould never be known; if he finds, that he is in no part of his private devotions more zealous, than when he prays from his heart to Him who ſearches all hearts, that his enemy may be pardoned, reformed, and made as happy hereafter as himſelf; if he finds that one diſappointment or abuſe of his goodneſs, or ten ſuch diſcouragements, do not cool his ardour for the good of mankind; that he does not immediately fall out of conceit with a public-ſpirited deſign, becauſe of its difficulties, or uncertainty of ſucceſs; but that he can ſtand the raillery of thoſe narrow ſouls, who cannot riſe to his pitch of diſintereſted benevolence; and that, though he goes on reſolutely, and without wearying in well-doing, he does not do it from pride or ſelf-ſufficiency, but from real well-meant goodneſs of heart and deſign; if he does not ſearch for excuſes, but conſiders himſelf as obliged to be always endeavouring to gain ſome kind and beneficial end, without regard to its being more or leſs directly in his way, or more or leſs promiſing of ſucceſs, if it is the beſt he can do at the time, and if no one elſe will do it better, or engage in it at all;

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and that after all he conſiders himſelf as an unprofitable ſervant, as having done ſtill only his indiſpenſable duty; if the reader finds this to be the turn of his mind, he may conclude that he is not far from that perfection of benevolence, which the Divine rectitude and law require, and which is neceſſary to fit every human mind for being a member of an univerſal ſociety hereafter. If on the other hand, he finds, that he is wholly wrapt up in himſelf; that he thinks with no reliſh of the happineſs of any one elſe; that his utmoſt benevolence extends no wider than the circle of his own family, friends, or party; that all he wants is to enrich himſelf and his relations; that he cannot look with any perſonal tenderneſs or conſideration upon a *Frenchman*, or *Spaniard*, a *Jew*, or a papiſt, or even a church-man, or diſſenter, if he differs from them in profeſſion; if, reader, thou findeſt this to be the turn of thy mind, if, in a word, thou doſt not find it to be thy meat and thy drink to do thy fellow-creature good, if thou doſt not love thy neighbour with the ſame affection as thyſelf, be aſſured thou art not at preſent of the diſpoſition of mind, which the univerſal Governor would have all his rational creatures brought to; and mayſt judge what chance thou haſt for His favour, whoſe favour is life and happineſs; whoſe love to all his creatures tends to draw and unite them to himſelf, and would have them all love one another, that by univerſal love they may be united into one ſociety, under one infinite Lord and univerſal Father.

SECT.

SECT. VIII.

Of our Obligations with reſpect to our Creator.

WE come now to the third, and nobleſt part of the duty of rational beings, which is alſo their higheſt honour, I mean, That which they owe to the Creator, Preſerver, and Governor of themſelves, and the univerſe. The firſt part, or foundation of which is, The belief of his exiſtence.

The abſtract proof of the exiſtence of God requires nothing to be granted, but only, That ſomething now exiſts; which conceſſion forces the mind to confeſs the neceſſity of ſome Firſt cauſe, exiſting naturally, neceſſarily, and independently upon any other; Himſelf the cauſe of all things; Himſelf the fountain of being, and plenitude of perfection.

This proof leaves no room for cavilling; but effectually cuts off the ſubtle diſputer from every poſſible evaſion, or ſubterfuge. It is not however ſo eaſy for thoſe, who have not been accuſtomed to abſtract reaſoning, to ſee the concluſive force of it. For the bulk of mankind, the fitteſt arguments for the being of God, are taken from the ſtupendous works of nature. And what object is there in the whole compaſs of nature, animate or inanimate, great or ſmall, rare or common, which does not point to the almighty Author of all things? Not only thoſe which ſtrike

ſtrike us with aſtoniſhment, and fill our minds with their greatneſs; not only the view of a rolling ocean, a blazing ſun, or the concave of heaven ſparkling with its innumerable ſtarry fires; but even the ſight of a flower, a pile of graſs, or a reptile of the duſt, every particle of matter around us; the body, into which his breath has infuſed our life; the ſoul, by which we think and know; whatever we fix our eye or thought upon, holds forth the ever-preſent Deity. In what ſtate or place muſt we be, to be inſenſible of him, by whom our very being is preſerved? Whither muſt we withdraw ourſelves, to be out of the reach of his Divine communications, who minutely fills every point of boundleſs ſpace? Is it poſſible to obliterate from our minds the thought of him in whom we live, and move, and have our being?

The firſt and fundamental duty of all rational beings to God, is, as I have ſaid, To believe his exiſtence. Now, though there is nothing praiſeworthy in believing the moſt important truth upon inſufficient grounds; and though, on the contrary, credulity is a weakneſs unworthy of a being endowed with a capacity of examing and finding out truth; yet there may be a great wickedneſs in unbelief. For a perſon may, from obſtinacy and perverſeneſs, reject important truth, or through levity, folly, or an attachment to vice, may avoid the proper and natural means of conviction. So that the effect, which the rational and

and clear perſuaſion of important truth might have had upon his diſpoſition and practice, may be loſt. And it is greatly to be ſuſpected, that multitudes are guilty of this laſt crime, with reſpect to the awful doctrine of the exiſtence of God. If they be aſked, whether they believe that there is a God, they will take it amiſs to be ſuſpected of the leaſt inclination to atheiſm. But it is evident, from their lives and converſations, that if they believe the exiſtence of God at all, it is in ſuch a manner, as is next to no belief. They think not of the matter. There may, or may not, be a God for any think they know, or care.

But to believe this important doctrine in a manner becoming a rational creature, is to bear in mind a conſtant and habitual impreſſion of an infinitely perfect Nature, the Author and Fountain of exiſtence, the wiſe and righteous Governor of the univerſe, who is every where preſent, beholding all the actions and intentions of his creatures, to whom all rational beings are accountable, and upon whoſe favour or diſapprobation their fate to all eternity wholly depends. To think of the Supreme being in any other way than this, is not believing his exiſtence in a rational and conſiſtent manner.

And did men really admit the rational belief of a God; did they impreſs their minds with a fixed and conſtant attention to the awful thought of their being under the continual inſpection of their judge, we ſhould not ſee them proceed in

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the manner they do. For I aſk, how the bulk of mankind could behave worſe than they do, if they were ſure there was no God? We ſee them ready to catch at every unwarrantable gratification of paſſion or appetite, to put every fraudulent or wicked ſcheme in execution, from which they are not reſtrained either by human laws, or by fear of loſing the eſteem and confidence of their fellow-creatures, with the advantages connected with it. What could they do more, if there was no God. Is there, taking mankind upon an average, one of an hundred, who heſitates at any vicious thought, word, or action, from the ſingle conſideration of its being perhaps diſpleaſing to God? Is there one of an hundred, who habitually regulates his thoughts, words, and actions, by the ſtandard of the Divine will, and would rather loſe the favour and approbation of all the men on earth, and all the angels of heaven, than his Maker's alone? How ſeldom do we meet with an inſtance of a perſon, who will not truckle, and temporize, commute, and compound with conſcience, or even ſtifle its remonſtrances, to gain the favour of the great? Whereas, if men acted upon the principle of a rational belief of a God, they would rather make a point of giving up all human favour, to make ſure of keeping ſtrictly to their duty; they would take care always to be on the ſafe ſide, to be ſcrupulouſly exact, rather than too free, in their lives and converſations; they would labour, if poſſible, to

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do more than the exact duty of their ſtations; and to avoid even the leaſt appearance of evil; as they who would make their court to a prince, do not grudge any extraordinary ſervice, attendance, or expence for him; are cautious of ſo much as ſeeming to look toward what may be diſagreeable to his humour or inclination, or in the leaſt favouring, or ſeeming to favour, thoſe whom he does not approve. Did men in any rational and conſiſtent manner believe the exiſtence of a God, or think of him as the Governor and Judge of the world, under whoſe immediate inſpection we ſtand at all moments, we ſhould ſee their conduct corrected and regulated by that conſtant awe and fear, which becomes dependent accountable beings, whoſe minds are duly impreſſed with a ſenſe of their preſent condition, and future expectations. Their belief would be practical as well as ſpeculative. It would affect their hearts; as well as impreſs their underſtandings.

How ſome men contrive to ſatisfy their own minds upon the ſubject of their duty to God, is inconceivable. One would imagine it impoſſible for a being at all capable of thought to bring himſelf to believe, that, though he owes his exiſtence, his body, his ſoul, his reaſoning faculty, ſpeech, and all his powers corporeal and mental, with whatever he enjoys now, or hopes for hereafter, to an infinitely perfect and amiable Being, who has made him capable of apprehending his perfections,

fections, and his abſolute power over him; one would imagine it impoſſible, I ſay, for a being endowed with a reaſoning faculty to believe all this, and yet think he owes no duty at all, no gratitude, love, or ſervice, no poſitive adoration or praiſe to his Creator, Governor, and Judge. Yet is there, even in this enlightened age, and this land of knowlege, a perſon among an hundred, who makes conſcience of regularly and habitually performing, in a rational and devout manner, the poſitive duties of meditation upon the Divine perfections, in order to raiſe his mind to an imitation of them; of addreſſing God by prayer for the ſupply of all his wants; or of praiſing him for the bounties received? On the contrary, is there not too much reaſon to conclude, that by far the greateſt part of mankind have not God in all their thoughts, or if they have, the thought of him produces no viſible effect? They attend the public worſhip indeed from a ſenſe of decency. But it is plain, from their general levity of behaviour, that their hearts are not in it. And, as for worſhipping God daily in their houſes, with their families, or by themſelves in their cloſets, they ſee no neceſſity for it, and conclude, that whoever lives ſoberly, and is good-natured, though he habitually neglects the whole third part of his duty, is likely to meet with the Divine approbation, and to be happy at laſt.

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It is proved above, that the Author of all things muſt be infinite in his eſſence, and in all poſſible perfections, as wiſdom, power, goodneſs, and rectitude. If ſo, it is evident, not only that he is the proper object of the admiration, love, gratitude, and every other noble affection, of the minds of ſuch low creatures as mankind, who are probably the meaneſt of all rational beings; but that it is the glory of the higheſt archangel in heaven to adore infinite perfection; nay, that the whole of the reverence, love, and praiſe of any conceivable number of created beings paid by them through all eternity, muſt fall infinitely ſhort of what is juſtly his due; becauſe the whole of the tribute of honour and ſervice, which all created beings can pay, will be finite; whereas the Divine perfections are infinite; now every finite is infinitely deficient, when compared with what is infinite.

To be more particular; the conſideration of the Divine immenſity, or omnipreſence, ought to ſtrike every thinking mind with the moſt profound awe and veneration, which ought to dwell upon it conſtantly and habitually, of its being at all times ſurrounded with the Divinity, which pervades all matter, and is the Spirit within every ſpirit, ſeeing, or rather intimately feeling, every motion of every mind in the univerſe. Whoever has juſt and habitual impreſſions of the Divine omnipreſence, will no more preſume to do anything amiſs, or even to think a bad thought, than

than a conſiderate perſon will dare to behave rudely in the Royal preſence. A thinking mind conſiders itſelf as at all times, by day and by night, in public and in private, abroad and at home, in the immediate and intimate preſence of the great King of the world; whoſe boundleſs palace is the whole univerſe. It will therefore be continually and habitually on its guard; and, as one who appears before an illuſtrious character, whoſe favour he greatly values, will be above all things fearful of miſbehaving; ſo will the conſiderate mind dread the danger of loſing the approbation of that ever-preſent Judge, upon whom his fate depends, infinitely more than pain, or poverty, or ſhame, or death, and will cheerfully expoſe himſelf to any or all of them, rather than act an unbecoming part before that eye, which is not to be deceived. He, who thinks how vice, or even frailty, muſt appear before that Being, whoſe very nature is rectitude in perfection, and who knows not the leaſt ſhadow of error, or deviation; can he think of voluntarily departing from the eternal rule of right, or allowing himſelf in any practice, which muſt offend infinite Purity?

The conſideration of the eternity, or perpetual exiſtence hereafter, of the Divinity, together with that of the neceſſary immutability of his nature, ſuggeſts to the pious and well-diſpoſed mind the comfortable proſpect, that after all the changes and revolutions which may happen to it, to the

kingdoms, and empires of this world, and to the world itſelf; after all the viſible objects, which now are, have performed their courſes, and are vaniſhed, or renewed; after a period of duration long enough to obliterate from all human memory the idea of a ſun, and ſtars, and earth; ſtill he, who is now Governor of the univerſe, will continue to fill the ſupreme throne, and to rule with boundleſs and uncontrouled ſway over his infinite dominions; and conſequently, that whoever is ſo wiſe as to ſtrive above all things to gain his favour, may depend upon being always ſecure of the enjoyment of the happineſs aſſigned him by the general Judge, and that no change in the affairs even of the whole univerſe, will ever remove him from that ſtation which has been appointed him. For the univerſal Governor will raiſe no one to happineſs hereafter, but ſuch as he finds qualified for it. Nor will the time ever come, when it will not be in his power to keep thoſe beings happy, which he has once made ſo; for his dominion is an everlaſting dominion, and of his kingdom there will never be an end. Nor will the time ever come, when he will change his purpoſe or ſcheme of government, or, like a weak earthly prince, degrade his favourites, or reverſe his laws, to indulge uncertain caprice.

This ſhews the ſupreme Being to be a very proper object of the truſt of all his creatures. Had I the favour of all the crowned heads in the world, it is evident, that in ſo ſhort a time as a century

century hence, it muſt be of no manner of value to me. Death will, in all probability, before that ſhort period be elapſed, remove every one of them, and myſelf too, into a ſtate, in which no favour will be of any avail, but that of the King of kings, upon whom they muſt be as much dependent as I. But to truſt to him who is eternal in his nature, and unchangeable in his purpoſe, and who has it in his power to make and keep his favourites eternally happy, is building upon a ſure foundation.

Here it is to be remembered, that it is only in a courſe of obedience that we have any pretence to truſt in God. All confidence in him, that is not founded in well-doing, is vain and preſumptuous, and will in the end be diſappointed. As the king on the throne has power to raiſe any perſon, whom he may judge worthy of honour, at the ſame time that it is vain and preſumptuous to think of truſting to him in any other way, than ſuch as may be likely to gain his favour; ſo, though the ſupreme King of the univerſe has power to raiſe any of his creatures to inconceivable happineſs, it is not to be expected that he will beſtow his favour upon any, but ſuch as ſhall be found worthy of it. And his infinite wiſdom will effectually prevent his being miſtaken in his judgment of characters; and renders it impoſſible that he ſhould beſtow his approbation amiſs. So that there is no ground of confidence for any, but thoſe who make it their ſincere and diligent en-

deavour to gain the Divine favour in the way which he has appointed.

It is impoſſible to ſurvey, with a diſcerning eye, the world which we inhabit, without reading the illuſtrious characters of power, wiſdom, and goodneſs, which the Divine hand has inſcribed upon it, each of which attributes ſuggeſts to us a ſett of duties, and therefore deſerves our particular conſideration.

To create, or bring into exiſtence, one particle of matter, which before was nothing, who can ſay what power is requiſite? The difference between nothing and a real exiſtence is ſtrictly and properly infinite. Which ſeems to imply an infinite difficulty to be ſurmounted, before one particle of matter can be produced. And no power, inferior to infinite, is equal to an infinite difficulty. Be that as it will, it is unqueſtionable, that to produce great works, requires proportionable power. And if the works of nature are not great, there is no greatneſs conceivable. The calling forth a world into being, had it been from its creation to remain for ever at reſt, had been an effect worthy of Divine power. But to give to a ſyſtem ſo huge and unwieldy, any degree of motion, much more to give a motion inconceivably ſwift to maſſes of matter inconceivably bulky; to accommodate velocity to what is the moſt unfit for being moved with velocity; to whirl a whole earth, a globe of twenty-five thouſand miles round, with all its mountains and

oceans,

oceans, at the rate of near ſixty-thouſand miles an hour; to carry on ſuch an amazing motion for many thouſands of years; to keep ſix ſuch bodies in continual motion, in different planes, and with different velocities, round a common centre, at the ſame time that ten others are revolving round them, and going along with them; what amazing power is requiſite to produce ſuch effects!

How do we admire the effects produced by a combination of mechanic powers (which alſo act by Divine power, or laws of nature) in raiſing weights, and overcoming the *vis inertiæ* of matter? What ſhould we think of a machine, conſtructed by human hands, by which St *Paul's* church, or a little hill, ſhould be tranſported half a mile from its place, with ever ſo ſlow a motion? But the greateſt mountain is no more in compariſon with the whole earth, than a grain of ſand to a mountain. Yet the whole cumbrous maſs of earth has been whirled round the ſun, for theſe five thouſand years and upwards, with a rapidity frightful to think of, and for any thing we know, with undiminiſhed force. And the comet in 1680-81, muſt, according to the *Newtonian* principles, have moved in its *perihelion*, or neareſt approach to the ſun, at the rate of above a million of miles in an hour, which was a flight near twenty times more rapid than that of the earth in its annual courſe. Now the ſwifteſt ſpeed of a horſe, that ever has been known,

was at the rate of one mile in one minute, which continued, would give ſixty miles in an hour, inſtead of more than a million, the comet's motion. The ſwifteſt horſe at full ſpeed may move twenty foot in the time that one can pronounce *one*, or ſixty foot, while one can ſay *one*, *two*, *three*. But to form ſome conception of the motion of the *Newtonian* comet, let the reader ſuppoſe himſelf placed upon ſuch an eminence as will give him a proſpect of fifty miles on each hand; the rapidity of that tremendous body in the ſwifteſt part of its courſe, was ſuch, that in the time of pronouncing one ſyllable, or in the twinkling of an eye, it would fly acroſs that ſpace of one hundred miles, while the ſwifteſt horſe would have proceeded twenty foot. Yet thoſe enormous bodies are, by the parallax they give, ſuppoſed to be nearly of the magnitude of our globe of earth and ocean, and ſome of them perhaps larger.

Now there is nothing more evident, than that in proportion to the quantity of matter to be moved, and the velocity with which it is to be moved, ſuch muſt be the moving force. Let the reader, therefore, if he has any talent in calculation, try to eſtimate the force required to give ſuch a furious rapidity to bodies of ſuch ſtupendous magnitude; if he has any imagination, let him fill it with the ſublime idea of omnipotence; and if he has either reaſon or religion, let him proſtrate

proſtrate his ſoul, and adore ſuch tremendous and irreſiſtible power.

Nor is leſs command of matter required to produce the aſtoniſhing appearances in the minute, than in the great world; to carry on the various ſecretions, circulations, and tranſmutations in vegetation, and the production, growth, and life of animals; eſpecially, when the degree of minuteneſs is ſuch, as it muſt be in an animalcule, of which millions would only equal the bulk of a grain of ſand. What power is required to wing the rapid light from its fountain the ſun to us in ſeven or eight minutes, with ſuch a ſwiftneſs, that in the inſtant of pronouncing the word *light*, ſixty thouſand miles are paſſed through!

To a being poſſeſſed of rightful power over us, the proper duty is evidently fear, or awe, and the conſequence of that is obedience. If we conſider the Supreme being as poſſeſſed of infinite, or boundleſs power over all his creatures, we muſt ſee the indiſpenſable neceſſity of the moſt profound ſubmiſſion to him, both in our diſpoſitions and practice. If we conſider him as our Creator, we muſt be convinced that he has an abſolute right to us, and to all our ſervices. If we think of him as irreſiſtible, rebellion againſt him is a degree of madneſs beyond all computation. For what laſting and inconceivably dreadful puniſhments may not ſuch power inflict upon thoſe perverſe and impenitent beings, who become the objects of his vengeance? And what chance can

the worms of the earth have to deliver themſelves out of the hands of the Almighty?

There is no inconſiſtency between the fear we owe to God, and the duty of love. On the contrary, love ever implies a fear to offend the perſon beloved. As on one hand, nothing is ſo perfectly amiable as infinite perfection, ſo neither is there any ſo proper object of fear, as he who is infinitely great and awful. And there is a wide difference between the ſlaviſh fear, which a criminal has for his judge, or that which a miſerable ſubject has for a tyrant, and that of a ſon for an affectionate father. Of this laſt kind is the reverence with which we ought to think of our Creator. Only we muſt take the utmoſt care not to entertain any notion of God, as of one capable of any weakneſs reſembling that of earthly parents. For it is certain, that the Judge of the world, whoſe rectitude and juſtice are abſolutely perfect and inviolable, will not, cannot be miſled, by fondneſs for his own creatures, to make the obdurately wicked happy. For, tho' he loves his creature, he loves juſtice more, and will not ſacrifice his own eternal and immutable attribute for the ſake of any number of worthleſs rebellious beings whatever.

As to the Divine wiſdom appearing in the works of creation, we are peculiarly at a loſs to conceive properly of it. For we come into a world ready finiſhed, and fit to be inhabited; and therefore have no conception of the immenſe

ſtretch

ſtretch of thought, the amazing depth of invention (if we may ſo ſpeak) that was neceſſary to plan an univerſe. Let any man imagine the ſtate of things before there was any created being, if ever ſuch a time was; when there was no plan, no model, or pattern to proceed upon; when the very idea of a univerſe, as well as the particular plan and execution of it, was to be drawn, ſo to ſpeak, out of the Divine imagination. Let the reader ſuppoſe himſelf to have been firſt produced, and to have had it revealed to him by his Creator, that a univerſe was to be created. A univerſe! What idea could he have formed of a univerſe? Had he been conſulted upon the plan of it, which part would he have begun at? Before light exiſted, could he have conceived the idea of light? Before there was either ſun, ſtars, or earth, could he have formed any conception of a ſun, ſtars, or earth? Could he have contrived light for the eye, or the eye for light? Could he have ſuited a world to its inhabitants, or inhabitants to a world? Could he have fitted bodies to minds, or minds to bodies?

If the reader ſhould not clearly enough ſee the difficulty of inventing and planning an univerſe from nothing, nor the wondrous foreſight and comprehenſive wiſdom, that was neceſſary for fitting an almoſt infinite number of things to one another, in ſuch a manner, that every particular ſhould anſwer its particular end, and fill its particular place, at the ſame time that it ſhould contribute

tribute to promote various other deſigns; if the depth of wiſdom, which has produced all this, does not ſufficiently appear to the reader, let him try to form a plan of a new world, quite different from all that he knows of in the preſent univerſe, in which none of our elements, nor light, nor animal life, nor any of the five ſenſes, nor reſpiration, nor vegetation ſhall have any place. And when he has uſed his utmoſt efforts, and put his invention upon the utmoſt ſtretch, and finds that he cannot form a ſhadow of one ſingle idea, of which the original is not drawn from nature; then let him confeſs his own weakneſs, and adore that boundleſs wiſdom, which has produced, out of its own infinite fertility of invention, enough to employ, and to confound the utmoſt human ſagacity.

Have not the moſt acute penetration, and indefatigable induſtry of the wiſe and learned of all ages, been employed (and how could they more worthily) in ſearching out the wonderful works of the Almighty maker of the univerſe? and have they yet found out one ſingle article to the bottom? Can all the philoſophers of modern times, who have added to the obſervations of the antients, the diſcoveries made by their own induſtry and ſagacity; can they give a ſatisfying account of the machinery of the body of a fly, or a worm? Can they tell what makes two particles of matter cohere? Can they tell what the ſubſtance of a particle of matter is? Is the ſcience

of

of phyſiology, delightful and noble as it is, and worthy of the ſtudy of angels, is it carried any farther than a ſett of obſervations, wonderful indeed, and ſtriking, but as to real cauſes, and internal natures, altogether in the dark? How do we admire, and juſtly, the exalted genius of our ſeemingly inſpired philoſopher, for going a pitch beyond the ſagacity of all mankind in diſcovering the laws, by which the vaſt machine of the world is governed? Yet he modeſtly owns the cauſe of attraction and gravitation to lie too deep for his penetration. How do we ſtand aſtoniſhed at the acuteneſs of a mind, which could purſue calculations to a degree of ſubtlety beyond the reach of by far the greateſt part of mankind to follow him in, even after he has ſhewn the way? What then ought we to think of that wiſdom, which in its meaneſt productions baffles the deepeſt penetration of a capacity, whoſe acuteneſs baffles the general underſtanding of mankind?

From the conſideration of the wiſdom we trace in the natural world, it is manifeſt, paſt all doubt, that the moral ſyſtem (for the ſake of which that of nature was brought into exiſtence) is under the ſame conduct, and will hereafter appear to be a ſcheme altogether worthy of God. For either both, or neither, muſt be the contrivance of Divine wiſdom. We cannot conceive of God as partly, or by halves, but wholly, the Creator and Governor of all beings, natural and moral. And if ſo, we may be aſſured, that, as in the

ſyſtem

ſyſtem of nature, final cauſes are fitted to produce their effects, and every part of the machine of the world is properly adjuſted to its place and purpoſe, ſo in the moral, every rational being will be determined to the ſtate and place he is found fit for; the good to happineſs, and the wicked to puniſhment; the highly elevated and purified mind to a high and eminent ſtation; and the corrupt and ſordid to ſhame and miſery; the ſoul, which has perfected its faculties, and refined its virtues, by imitation of the Divine perfections, to the converſation of angels and the beatific viſion of God, and that which has by vice debauched and ſunk itſelf below the brutes, to the place of dæmons and fallen ſpirits. And all this may probably proceed as much according to the original conſtitution of things, as a cauſe produces its effect in the natural world; as fire produces the diſſipation of the parts of combuſtible ſubſtances; as nouriſhment tends to the ſupport of animal life; and as matter tends to decay. So that the only thing which hinders a wicked embodied mind from being now in torments, may be, its being ſtill embodied, and not yet let out into the world of ſpirits, where a new and dreadful ſcene will of courſe immediately open upon it, as ſoon as it comes to be diveſted of the earthly vehicle, which now conceals thoſe inviſible horrors, and protects it from its future tormentors. And in the ſame manner, the virtuous and exalted mind would be now in a ſtate

of happineſs, if it were not prevented from the commerce of bleſſed ſpirits, and the view of the inviſible world, by the impenetrable veil of fleſh which ſurrounds it. But this ſuppoſition does not at all affect the doctrine of poſitive rewards and puniſhments, nor of ſeparate places appointed for receiving the good, and the wicked, after the final judgment.

If we find the mere material ſyſtem of nature to be wrought by a degree of wiſdom altogether beyond our comprehenſion, it would be madneſs to ſuppoſe that we ſhall ever have ſagacity enough to baffle the Divine ſcheme in the moral government of the world; that we ſhall be able to contrive any way of eſcaping from the puniſhment we may deſerve. No. His counſel will ſtand; and he will do all his pleaſure. It will not be in our power to deceive his penetration, to get out of his reach, or to defend ourſelves againſt his juſtice.

To frame ſome idea of the Divine goodneſs in the creation of the world, it will be neceſſary to go back in imagination to the ages which preceded all creation, if ſuch there were, or, however, to thoſe, which were prior to the production of our world. Let us then view the awful Majeſty of heaven ſurrounded with ineffable glory, and enthroned in abſolute perfection, beyond conception bleſſed in the conſciouſneſs of unbounded plenitude. What motive could influence him, who already enjoyed complete perfection

tion and happineſs, to call unſubſtantial nothing into exiſtence? What could be the views of infinite wiſdom in ſpeaking a world into being? No proſpect of any addition to his own perfection or happineſs: for that which was already infinite, what addition could it receive? Could the adorable Creator propoſe to be more than infinitely perfect and happy? It is evident, his ſole view muſt have been to the happineſs of the creatures he was to produce. His own was ever, and ever muſt be, unbounded, undiminiſhed, and unchanged. The addition of happineſs therefore, which was to be produced, was to be beſtowed upon thoſe who were not yet created. Does then Divine goodneſs extend to that which has no exiſtence? Does the univerſal Parent think of what is not? We, poor, narrow ſouls! think it a mighty ſtretch of benevolence, if we can bring ourſelves to regard with ſome meaſure of affection thoſe of our fellow-creatures, who ſtand moſt nearly connected with us; in loving whom, we do little more than love ourſelves, or love our friends and relations for our own ſakes. If there be a mind yet more generous, it may take in its country, or the human ſpecies. A benevolence ſtill more extenſive may perhaps enlarge itſelf ſo wide as to comprehend within its generous embrace the various orders of being which form the univerſal ſcale; deſcending from the flaming ſeraph to the humble reptile. Nor indeed can any mind ſincerely love the Almighty

mighty maker; and hate, or deſpiſe any of the works of the ſame hand, which formed itſelf. But the Divine benevolence is as far beyond all this, as infinitude is larger than any limited ſpace. How peeviſh, and apt to take offence at every trifling injury, are narrow-hearted mortals! Yet what are the inſults, our fellow-worms can offer us, when compared with the atrociouſneſs of an offence committed by the duſt of the earth againſt the infinite Majeſty of the univerſe? Though the omniſcient Creator from eternity foreſaw, that the creatures, he was to form, would prove rebellious and diſobedient; that they would violate all his wiſe and ſacred laws, and inſult his ſovereign honour, as Governor of the world; has he grudged to give them exiſtence; to beſtow upon them a temporary happineſs; to make his ſun ſhine, and his rain deſcend on all promiſcuouſly; and put it in the power of all to attain perfection, happineſs, and glory? What neglect of every duty and obligation; how many acts of fraud, oppreſſion, and cruelty; how many horrid execrations, and infernal blaſphemies, does every day record againſt the daring race of men around the world? Yet ſeldom does the Divine vengeance break looſe upon the impious offenders. Our wicked ſpecies, if there were no other lawleſs order of creatures in the univerſe, are ever offending. And yet the thunder ſeldom ſtrikes the guilty dead. Earthquakes and inundations are rarely let looſe. A few cities purged by fire, and a world cleanſed by

by a deluge once in ſix thouſand years, ſerve juſt to put unthinking mortals in remembrance that there is a power above them. So that every moment of the duration of the world is an univerſal witneſs declaring to all the nations of the earth, in a language diſtinctly intelligible to all, the goodneſs of the Maker and Governor of the univerſe. At the ſame time that the prince of angels receives from the immediate communications of the Divine goodneſs, beatitude paſt utterance, the humble peaſant rejoices in his bounty, with which the fields are enriched, and the fair face of nature adorned. Even the lonely ſavage in the wilderneſs, the ſordid reptile in the duſt, and the ſcaly nations, which people the unfathomable deep, all taſte of the bounty, and are ſupported by the unlimited goodneſs, of the univerſal Parent, who opens his unwearied hand liberally, and ſatisfies every living ſoul.

If human underſtanding apprehends any thing according to truth and right, the benevolent character is the proper object of the love of every rational mind, as the contrary is the natural object of averſion. If every human, or other finite mind, is more or leſs amiable, according as it has more or leſs of this excellent diſpoſition; it is evident, that infinite goodneſs is infinitely amiable. Who is he, that pretends to think and reaſon, and has no pleaſure in contemplating the Divine goodneſs? Who can reflect upon ſuch goodneſs, and not admire it? Who can admire,

and

and not endeavour to imitate it? Who can imitate it, and not be an univerſal bleſſing? Who can be an univerſal bleſſing, and not be happy?

If the Divine goodneſs be evidently diſintereſted, it being impoſſible that the ſmalleſt happineſs ſhould, from any enjoyed by the creatures, be added to that of the Creator, which is neceſſarily infinite, it is plain, what makes real and perfect goodneſs of diſpoſition in any mind, viz. A propenſity to contribute to the happineſs of others without any view to ſelf-intereſt. In ſo far as a view to one's own happineſs is the motive to his exerting himſelf for the good of his fellow-creatures, in ſo far it has leſs of the truly worthy and commendable in it. For ſelf-love, being merely inſtinctive, has nothing praiſe-worthy. And to promote the happineſs of others for the ſake of adding to one's own, is what the moſt ſelfiſh and ſordid character is capable of. To be truly benevolent, is to imitate the Deity; to do good for the ſake of doing good; to be bountiful from the diſpoſition of the mind, from univerſal love and kindneſs, from rational conſiderations of the intrinſic excellence of that Godlike diſpoſition; not from mere weak and effeminate ſoftneſs of nature.

It is ſtrange that ever it ſhould have been queſtioned, whether it is reaſonable for dependent creatures to addreſs themſelves to their infinite Creator for the ſupply of their wants. Yet books have been written to ſhew the unreaſon-

ableneſs of prayer. "The ſupreme Being," ſays an objector, "knows whether I am worthy to "receive favours at his hand, and what I moſt "need, before I apply to him. If I am worthy, "he will beſtow, whether I aſk or not: if not, "he will not be prevailed on by any ſolicitation "to beſtow upon an unworthy object. If I aſk "what is unfit for me, he is too wiſe and good "to grant it; and if I aſk what is fit, I gain "nothing; for he would have beſtowed it upon "me of his own goodneſs, without my aſking."

There cannot be a more egregious fallacy than that, on which this objection is founded. For it is evident, that, if it be rational to think of ourſelves as beings dependent upon the Supreme, it is rational for us to expreſs our dependence; if it be reaſonable for us to expreſs our dependence on our Creator, it is unjuſtifiable in us to neglect it; ſo that I can in no propriety of ſpeech be ſaid to be a worthy object of the Divine favour, till I actually addreſs myſelf to him. Again, it is evident, that no degree of homage, or ſubmiſſion, ought to be wanting from dependent creatures to their Creator. But the ſervice of both body and mind is a greater degree of homage, than that of the mind alone. So that till I yield the bodily homage, as well as that of the mind, my ſervice is deficient, which renders me an unworthy object of the Divine favour.

It is likewiſe remarkable, that many of the more rational and pious writers on this ſubject, have

have laboured to repreſent the whole *rationale* of the duty of prayer as conſiſting in the advantage which is thereby to accrue to the worſhiper by improvement in piety and goodneſs. It is true, that the moral effects likely to be produced by the conſtant obſervance of this moſt important duty, are of great and ineſtimable conſequence, which render it a moſt uſeful inſtrument for thoſe noble purpoſes. Did men habitually obſerve the practice of addreſſing themſelves to their Creator with an awful ſenſe of his infinite greatneſs and authority over them; ſuch a fixed impreſſion muſt in time be thereby made upon their minds, as would prove a reſtraint from vice, at all times, and in all caſes, equally powerful. Did people make a point of applying conſtantly and regularly to the Giver of every good gift, they could hardly miſs entertaining in their minds an habitual ſenſe of their abſolute dependence upon him; of gratitude for his bounties received; and of ſtudying obedience, in order to his future favour. What man could be ſo hardned as to go on daily lamenting and confeſſing his offences, and daily repeating them? Who could preſumptuouſly be guilty of a crime, which he knew he muſt the ſame day confeſs to his all-ſeeing Judge, and implore the pardon of it? He, who kept up this conſtant intercourſe with his Creator, muſt find himſelf very powerfully influenced by it, and improved in every pious and worthy diſpoſition. But beſides all this, it is

evidently in itſelf a reaſonable ſervice; and is to be conſidered not only as a noble and valuable means of moral improvement, but as a poſitive act of virtue; it being as proper virtue to render to God the honour and worſhip due to him, as to give to men their juſt rights. And to withhold from him what he has the moſt unqueſtionable title to, being as much an injuſtice (with the atrocious addition of its being committed againſt the Greateſt and Beſt of beings) as to with-hold from a fellow-creature his juſt property. There is alſo plainly a connexion in nature and reaſon, between aſking and receiving, and between neglecting to aſk and not receiving. This natural connexion makes it reaſonable for dependent creatures to expect to obtain their reaſonable requeſts; and to conclude, that what they do not think it worth while to aſk, they ſhall not receive. If there were not ſuch a connexion and foundation in reaſon for this duty, it had never been commanded by the all-wiſe Law-giver of the univerſe; nor come to be univerſally practiſed by the wiſeſt and beſt of mankind, in all ages and nations. Nor is there any greater difficulty in conceiving the poſſibility of a pre-eſtabliſhed ſcheme in the Divine oeconomy, according to which the bleſſings of heaven, whether of a ſpiritual or temporal nature, ſhould be granted to thoſe who ſhould aſk, and be found fit to receive them; than in any other inſtance of providence,

vidence, or than in the future happineſs of the good part of mankind, and not of the wicked.

If the ſupreme Being be One, he is the proper object of the adoration of all reaſonable beings, becauſe, having all things in his abſolute diſpoſal, without poſſibility of being thwarted or controuled by any one, if we can gain his good-will, we cannot want that of any other. If He be kind and good in the moſt diſintereſted manner, and to the higheſt degree, even extending his bounty to the wicked and rebellious, and preſerving them in exiſtence, who make no uſe of their exiſtence, but to offend Him; it is reaſonable to hope, that he will lend a propitious ear to the humble requeſts of the virtuous and pious part of his creatures. If He has all things in his power; and can beſtow without meaſure gifts both ſpiritual and temporal, without diminiſhing his inexhauſtible riches; to apply to Him is going where we are ſure we ſhall not be diſappointed, through want of ability to ſupply us. If He is every where preſent, we may be ſure of being heard, wherever we make our addreſſes to him. If He is within our very minds, we cannot raiſe a thought toward him, but he muſt perceive it. If He is infinitely wiſe, he knows exactly what is fit for us, and will grant ſuch of our petitions as may be proper to be beſtowed upon us, and with-hold whatever may prove hurtful, though we have aſked it. If it be reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that he expects all his thinking creatures to apply

to him, we may do it with this comfortable conſideration, to encourage us; that in addreſſing him, we are doing what is agreeable to his nature and will; and cannot offend him, but by our manner of performing it. Were I to have an audience of a prince, it would give me great encouragement to know that he was graciouſly diſpoſed toward me, that I ſhould not offend him by begging his favour and protection; but that on the contrary, he expected I ſhould petition him, and would even take it amiſs if I did not; that he had it fully in his power, as well as in his inclination, to grant me the greateſt favour I ſhould have occaſion to aſk him; and that it was his peculiar delight to oblige and make his ſubjects happy. There are few princes, of whom moſt of theſe things may be ſaid; and none of whom all may be affirmed. And yet they find, to their no ſmall trouble and incumbrance, that for the few inconſiderable periſhing favours they have in their power, there are petitioners almoſt innumerable. Whilſt the infinitely good Giver of all things, whoſe diſpoſition, and whoſe power, to beſtow happineſs inconceivable, are equally boundleſs; is neglected, and defrauded of that homage and devotion, to which all his creatures ought to be drawn by a ſenſe of their own abſolute dependence upon him; of his ability and readineſs to beſtow; of his authority, who has commanded them to make their requeſts to him; and by the ſpontaneous dictates

of

of their own minds, directing them to the performance of a duty ſo eaſy, ſo reaſonable, and ſo promiſing of the moſt important advantages.

Though the principal part of prayer is petition, or addreſſing heaven for the ſupply of our various wants for life and futurity, there are other branches, as confeſſion of our infirmities and faults; thankſgiving for the various inſtances we have received of the Divine goodneſs; and interceſſion for our fellow-creatures. The ſubject of our petitions for ourſelves, ought to be, the neceſſaries of this life, for which the rich, as well as the poor, depend daily on the Divine bounty; and the Divine aſſiſtance toward our being fitted for happineſs hereafter. The firſt, if we judge wiſely, we ſhall aſk with great ſubmiſſion, and in moderation, as being of leſs conſequence, and too apt to have bad effects upon our moral characters, when liberally beſtowed. The latter, being of infinite conſequence to us, we may requeſt with more earneſtneſs and importunity.

If we give the leaſt attention to our own characters, we muſt find our thoughts often trifling and wicked, our words fooliſh and miſchievous, and our actions criminal before God. If we have any conſideration, we cannot but think ourſelves deplorably deficient in the performance of our duty with regard to ourſelves, our fellow-creatures, and our Creator. If we are in reaſon obliged to think often of the fatal errors of our lives, to view and review them attentively, with

all their heavy aggravations, and to mourn and lament them in our own minds; if all this be highly proper and reaſonable, it is more peculiarly reaſonable to acknowledge our offences before Him, whom we have offended; to implore his pardon, who alone can forgive, and deprecate his vengeance, which we have ſo juſtly deſerved. We ourſelves, when offended by a fellow-creature, expect that he ſhould not only be convinced in his own mind of his miſbehaviour, and ſpeak of it with concern to others; but likewiſe, that he come, and make a direct acknowledgment, and aſk our pardon. Nor is there any thing unreaſonable in all this. How much more, when we have offended Him who is infinitely above us, and from whom we have every thing to fear, if we do not, by ſincere repentance, and thorough reformation, avert the deſerved puniſhment. Eſpecially, if we conſider that the performance of this duty tends naturally to lead us to real repentance and reformation.

As we ought in our prayers to confeſs our faults and errors, and that not in general terms, but with particular reflection, in our own minds, upon the principal and groſſeſt of them, which every true penitent has ever upon his heart, and before his eyes; ſo ought we in all reaſon to return our ſincere thanks to the univerſal Benefactor, expreſsly for every particular ſignal inſtance of his favour, whether thoſe, in which mankind

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in general ſhare with us, or thoſe in which we have been diſtinguiſhed from others.

If we have upon our minds a due and habitual ſenſe of our offences, we ſhall of ourſelves be willing to make confeſſion of them. If we have any gratitude in our nature, we ſhall not fail to expreſs our acknowledgments for favours received. And if we have any real benevolence for our fellow-creatures, we ſhall be naturally led to think it our duty to preſent to the common Father of all our good wiſhes for them; that they may be favoured with every bleſſing, which may tend to promote univerſal happineſs ſpiritual and temporal.

If it be at all rational to worſhip God by prayer, it is obviouſly ſo to join together at proper times in that ſublime exerciſe. The advantages of public aſſemblies for religious purpoſes, are, the impreſſing more powerfully upon the minds of the worſhipers, the ſublimity and importance of the duty they are employed in; and the powerful effects of univerſal example. It is pretty evident, that the public worſhip on Sundays is what chiefly keeps up the little appearance of religion that is ſtill left among us. I think there is no good reaſon againſt keeping up in public worſhip as much pomp and magnificence as may be conſiſtent with propriety, and ſo as to avoid oſtentation and ſuperſtition. We are, in our preſent ſtate, very mechanical, and need all proper helps for drawing our inclinations along with our

duty,

duty, for engaging our attention, and making ſuch impreſſions upon us, as may be laſting and effectual. Public worſhip ought to be ſo conducted, as to be moſt likely to prepare us for a more numerous ſociety, in which more ſublime exerciſes of devotion, than any we are now capable of conceiving of, may be a conſiderable part of our employment, and happineſs.

Did our leading people think rightly, they would ſee the advantages of giving their attendance themſelves at places of public worſhip, and uſing their influence, and authority, to draw others to follow the ſame laudable example. Deplorable are the excuſes and apologies made by them for their too general and infamous neglect of the unqueſtionable duty of attending the public worſhip of God. Nor would it be eaſy to determine, whether their practice ſhews more want of ſenſe or of goodneſs. One mighty pretence made by them is, That, as to public inſtructions, truly they hold themſelves to be as good judges of moral and Divine ſubjects as the clergy; and therefore think it loſt time to give their attention to any thing, which may be delivered from the pulpit. Now, it ſeems at leaſt not very probable, that people, who ſpend moſt of their time (Sundays not excepted) at the card-table, ſhould as thoroughly underſtand the extenſive ſciences of morals, and theology, as the public teachers of religion, who have ſpent many years wholly in thoſe ſtudies. Thoſe very perſons,

ſons, when they chance to be overtaken with ſickneſs, are very ready to call in phyſicians, and do not pretend to underſtand, as well as they, who have made phyſic their ſtudy, the nature and cure of diſeaſes. But were it ſtrictly true, that the polite people of our age are ſo wiſe, that they are not like to hear any thing new, nor any known truth ſet in a new light by any preacher; ſtill is it not an advantage to have a ſett of good thoughts, which lay dormant in the mind, excited and called up to the attention of the underſtanding by an elegant and judicious diſcourſe? Were there likewiſe nothing in this, what public-ſpirited perſon would not even go out of his way for the ſake of ſetting a good example before the young and ignorant, who want inſtruction, if he does not. But when all is ſaid, here is no pretence for neglecting the public *worſhip* of God, which is one principal end of religious aſſemblies. So that thoſe, who habitually throw contempt upon this part of duty, are evidently guilty of a breach of common decency, and natural religion, and are altogether without excuſe.

If public worſhip, in which the inhabitants of a whole quarter join together, be reaſonable; it ſeems as much ſo, that families ſhould ſet apart ſtated times daily for that purpoſe. We are ſocial beings, and ought to be ſocial in all things that are commendable. And if heads of families are in reaſon obliged to take care, that their children and dependents have opportunity of conſulting

ſulting the intereſts of a future life, and of being led by example, or moved by authority, to the obſervance of their duty; it is obvious, that in this important one of worſhiping God, perſons in ſtations of authority and example ought by no means to be wanting, leſt the failures (through their bad example) of thoſe, over whom they have had charge, be hereafter juſtly imputed to their negligence.

The uſual excuſes for the neglect of family-religion, made even by many, who do not deny its uſefulneſs and propriety, are, want of time; and a certain fooliſh reluctancy at performing the duty of addreſſing their Creator in preſence of others. As to the former, there is no well-regulated houſe, in which the family cannot be called together for half-an-hour before the buſineſs, or the pleaſure, of the day comes on, to addreſs their Creator for his bleſſing and favour through the day; and the ſame at night, to join in thanking him for the mercies of the day. That time muſt be employed in ſome way different from what has been yet heard of, which is applied better than to the ſervice of God. If we can find time for eating, drinking, dreſſing, merchandizing, or cards; to pretend to want time for worſhiping God, is monſtrous.

As for the other objection againſt keeping up the worſhip of God in families, it is almoſt too frivolous to deſerve any anſwer at all. Surely nothing is eaſier, than to chooſe out a few proper

per paſſages from Scripture, or, with the help of the common-prayer of the church, and other books of devotion almoſt innumerable, to compile a ſet of devotions ſuited to the uſe of a family, and for the maſter of the houſe, kneeling or ſtanding, with his children and domeſtics about him, to pronounce them with proper devotion, the reſt joining mentally, or with a low voice, in every petition. If any maſter of a family chooſes to compoſe a ſett of devotions for his own uſe, I will only mention one direction, which might render them more uſeful, than they could otherwiſe be. It is, that in them, the moral virtues, or duties of temperance, benevolence, and piety, might be ſo worked into the petitions, that, in praying for the Divine grace and aſſiſtance to perform their duty, they ſhould be led to reflect upon it, and put in mind to examine themſelves whether they make conſcience of performing it. By this means the daily devotions in the family might partly anſwer the end of homilies or inſtructions.

Who does not ſee, that the natural conſequences of ſuch an oeconomy, conſtantly kept up in houſes, are likely to be, the promoting of fidelity in domeſtics, obedience in children, and drawing down the Divine bleſſing upon families; and, on the contrary, that a ſociety, in which no regard is ſhewn to the Supreme being, is not likely to be bleſt with the Divine favour or protection?

That all devotions in which others are to join with the perſon, who utters them, even in a private family, are better pre-compoſed than ſpoken extempore, ſeems to me very clear. There are extremely few, even among men of the beſt abilities, who are capable of uttering fluently, and without heſitation, tautology, or ſome kind of impropriety, an unſtudied ſpeech of any length. And that a ſpeech made in public to God himſelf ſhould be ill-digeſted, muſt be owned to be very groſs. For it is evident, that in ſuch a caſe, the ſpeaker, inſtead of leading along with him the devotion of his hearers, muſt confound and diſtract it. And it ſeems enough in any reaſon, that the ſpeaker have the manner, and delivery to attend to, without his being obliged at the ſame time to ſtudy the matter.

The ſupplication of a ſingle perſon by himſelf, is, in my opinion, more properly preſented in his own thoughts or words, than in thoſe of any other; Though the reading of books of devotion are uſeful helps to thoſe whoſe thoughts want to be helped out.

What can be more rational, more ſublime, or more delightful, than for a dependent creature to raiſe his thoughts to his Creator; to fill his mind with a ſenſe of the preſent Divinity; to pour forth his ſoul before Him who made it? What ſo great honour can an humble mortal enjoy, as to be allowed to ſpeak to God? What exerciſe can the rational ſoul engage in, ſo worthy the exer-

tion of its nobleſt powers and faculties, as addreſſing the Majeſty of heaven? How can it, in this preſent ſtate, approach ſo near to the Author of its being, or riſe to an enjoyment ſo much reſembling the beatific viſion, as by this ſublime converſe with the omnipreſent Deity? To ſwell the thought with the infinite greatneſs of the Object of worſhip; to conſider one's ſelf as addreſſing that tremendous Power, whoſe word produced the univerſe; to think that one is going to proſtrate his ſoul before Him who formed it, who is to be its judge, and has the power of diſpoſing of it for eternity! —— What can be conceived ſo wonderfully awful and ſtriking? But to reflect, that the glorious Object of worſhip, tho' infinitely exalted above the adoration of angels and archangels, is yet ready to hear, and beſtow happineſs upon the meaneſt of his rational creatures; to think that the humble petition of the ſincere penitent will not be rejected; that the poor and needy are no more beneath his notice, or out of the reach of his goodneſs, than the rich and the mighty; what can be more comfortable? If God is the awful judge of mankind, he is alſo the merciful Father of mankind. If his eye is too pure to behold preſumptuous vice without abhorrence, and too piercing to be deceived by the moſt artful hypocriſy; it is alſo open to look with pity upon the proſtrate mourner, and his goodneſs ready to forgive the humble penitent what he cannot forgive himſelf.

Be no longer, unthinking mortal, ſo much thy own enemy, as to exclude thyſelf from the higheſt honour thy nature is capable of. Aſpire to the ſublime happineſs of converſing with thy Maker. Enlarge thy narrow mind to take in the thought of him for whom thou art made. Call forth all that is within thee to magnify and praiſe Him. Humble thyſelf to the duſt, in the contemplation of his unequalled Majeſty. Open the inmoſt receſſes of thy ſoul to Him who gave it being. Expoſe to Him, who knows thy frame, thy weakneſſes and thy faults. Think not to conceal or palliate them before that eye which is not to be deceived. Haſt thou offended? Make no delay to confeſs before thy Creator and thy Judge, what he already knows. Tho' he already knows thy folly, he expects thy own confeſſion of it, and that thou deprecate his vengeance. Though he may already have thoughts of mercy for thee, it is only on condition that thou humbly implore it, and by repentance and amendment ſhew thyſelf worthy of it. Art thou weak and helpleſs? If thou knoweſt thyſelf, thou feeleſt it. Addreſs thyſelf then to Him who is almighty, that his power may ſupport thee. Art thou ignorant and ſhort-ſighted? If thou doſt not think thyſelf ſo, thou art blind indeed. Apply then to Him, whoſe knowledge is infinite, that thou mayſt be wiſe in his wiſdom. Art thou in want of all things? If thou thinkeſt otherwiſe, thou art wretched indeed. Have recourſe then

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to Him who is the Lord of all things, and is poſſeſſed of inexhauſtible riches. If thou haſt a juſt ſenſe of thy own ſtate, if thou haſt proper conceptions of thy Creator and Judge, or if thou haſt a ſoul capable of any thought worthy the dignity of a reaſonable immortal nature, thou wilt make it thy greateſt delight to worſhip and adore Him, whom to ſerve is the glory of the brighteſt ſeraph in the celeſtial regions.

A numerous aſſembly of people, celebrating with grateful hearts the praiſes of their almighty Creator and bountiful Benefactor, may be, for any thing we can conceive, one of the beſt emblems of ſome part of the future employment and happineſs of immortal ſpirits, which the preſent ſtate can exhibit. It were well, if we could, by the mere force of cool reaſon, ſo elevate our conceptions of the Divinity, as worthily to magnify him in our public aſſemblies. But ſo long as we continue the mechanical beings we are, we muſt be willing to uſe all poſſible helps for working ourſelves up to what our imperfect faculties of themſelves are not generally ſpeaking equal to, or however are not at all times in a condition for. Whoever underſtands human nature, knows, of what conſequence aſſociations are. And it is wholly owing to the infirmities of our nature and preſent ſtate, that a due regard to decency and ſolemnity in public worſhip, is of ſuch importance towards our moral improvement. Conſidering theſe things, it is with concern I muſt

obſerve upon the manner of performing the ſolemn office of praiſing God in our public aſſemblies, that it very much wants reformation. I know of no application of muſic to this ſublime uſe, that is not ſadly deficient, except what is compoſed in the manner of anthems. For as in every piece of ſacred poeſy, there are various and very different taſtes, and ſtrains, it is evident, that to apply the ſame returning ſett of notes to all alike is inconſtent, and not expreſſive of the ſenſe and ſpirit of the piece, The eighteenth Pſalm, for example, is one of the nobleſt hymns in Holy Scripture. From the beginning to the fourth verſe, the royal author expreſſes his, or the Meſſiah's joy and gratitude for his deliverance from his enemies. It is evident, that the muſic, which is to accompany this part of the piece, ought to be bold, cheerful, and triumphant. Elſe it will diſguiſe and miſrepreſent the thoughts, inſtead of expreſſing them. The fourth and fifth verſes expreſs the pſalmiſt's, or Meſſiah's, dreadful diſtreſs, by the cruelty of wicked men, or evil ſpirits. It is plain, that the triumphant ſtrains of muſic, which ſuited the former part, are not at allproper to expreſs this; but that on the contrary, it requires a ſett of the moſt dreary and horrid ſounds which muſic can utter. The ſixth verſe repreſents the ſacred writer's, or Meſſiah's, complaint in his great diſtreſs. To expreſs this ſuitably, neither of the former ſpecies of melody is proper; but a ſett of melancholy and plaintive

tive notes. The ſeventh, and ſome of the following verſes, give an account of the Divine appearance in anſwer to the foregoing prayer, attended with earthquakes, tempeſts, lightenings, and all the terrors of Omnipotence. Every one of which images ought to be repreſented by a ſtrain of muſic, properly adapted to the ſenſe, in taſte and expreſſion. But to chant this whole piece, as is done at cathedral churches, or to ſing it, as at pariſh churches, and meetings, to the ſame ſett of notes, returning through every ſucceeding verſe, is not performing the piece ſo well as if the preacher were to read it to the people. For a perſon of a good elocution would utter it in ſuch a manner, as at leaſt ſhould not diſguiſe or miſrepreſent the ſenſe, as is the affect of applying to it unſuitable, or bad muſic, which is worſe than none. But, to thoſe, who find proper ſentiments excited in their minds by the more imperfect ways of performing the Divine praiſes, I have nothing to ſay, to leſſen the ſatisfaction they have. I only would ſhew what is the moſt effectual and perfect way of applying muſic to religious purpoſes. And, after all, a proper diſpoſition of mind is the principal thing, without which no bodily ſervice can be acceptable to infinite Purity.

To conclude, it is evident, that our duty to our Creator is, as above obſerved, the moſt important, and nobleſt part of what we ought to ſtudy, and practiſe, in order to attain the true

dignity of human nature. For that infinite Being, by whom, and for whom we are, though in his eſſence inviſible, in his nature incomprehenſible, in his perfections inconceivable, does yet preſent himſelf to all our perceptions, bodily and mental. Every object we behold, every ſound we hear, every bodily ſubſtance we touch, every ſubject of thought, muſt be either himſelf, or the work of his power. Our ſenſes, whenever we exert them, are employed upon ſome creature of Omnipotence; and when the mind abſtracts itſelf from all the bodily operations, even then it apprehends, it ſees, it feels, the ſuſtaining, informing, and invigorating power within it. It finds itſelf ſurrounded with the immenſity of Divinity, and that itſelf and all things are eſtabliſhed on that univerſal baſis of exiſtence; that all things are full of Deity; and that his preſence is the Mind within the mind.

How amazing then the ſtupidity of numbers of the human ſpecies! An order of beings formed with a capacity for apprehending the Creator and Governor of the univerſe; for contemplating the moſt delightful and moſt ſtriking of all ſubjects; for having their minds enlarged and ennobled by being habituated to the grand ideas of immenſity, of wiſdom, goodneſs, power, and glory unbounded and unlimited! Yet how do numbers of them paſs through life, without ever endeavouring to form any juſt notions of that Being on whom they depend for their very exiſtence;

iſtence; without ever thinking of any duty they may owe him, or any conſequence of gaining or loſing his favour! What ſtupendous glories, what wondrous perfections, what ſublime contemplations, are loſt to the groſs and inſenſible minds of many of our ſpecies! How is the only Being, who poſſeſſes exiſtence in himſelf, over-looked by thoſe whom he himſelf has brought into being! How does he by whom all things exiſt, ſeem to ſuch inconſiderate minds not to exiſt! How do the glories of his works, which were intended to point him out, conceal from ſuch unthinking minds the glorious Maker! How do ſuch ungrateful men baſely take up with the gifts, without thinking on the all-bounteous Giver! How much are thoſe men of groſs and earthly diſpoſitions their own enemies! How do they ſtrive to feed their heaven-born minds with the unſatisfying and nauſeous objects of ſenſe, depriving them of that ſublime entertainment, for which they were intended, and which is ever offering itſelf to them, the contemplation and enjoyment of Divinity, the poſſeſſion of infinite perfection! Open thy narrow mind, unthinking mortal. Enlarge thy confined deſires. Raiſe thy groveling ambition. Quit the trifling objects which now poſſeſs, and which will in the end diſappoint thee. Trample under thy feet the wretched amuſements of riches, honours, and pleaſures; and aſpire to what is worthy the dignity of thy nature, and thy divine original. It is thy Maker himſelf that is ready to take poſſeſ-

ſion of thy mind. It is the Divinity himſelf, that would pour into thy ſoul delights ineffable, that would dwell in thee, and join thee to himſelf in an eternal union, which will raiſe thee to bliſs and glory above thy moſt extenſive wiſhes, beyond thy moſt elevated conceptions.

SECT. IX.

Miſcellaneous Thoughts, and Directions, chiefly Moral.

IF the reader ſhould find, among the following aphoriſms, ſome ehoughts to much the ſame purpoſe with others, in other parts of this work; it is hoped, he will excuſe ſuch a repetition, in conſideration of the variety of matter, and the uſefulneſs of the ſubjects; which will bear being inculcated in the moſt copious manner.

It is not the part of a wiſe man to be eager after any thing, but improvement in goodneſs. All things elſe may be diſpenſed with.

To learn to talk well, learn firſt to hear.

Reſiſt vice at the beginning, and you will conquer it in the end.

A clear conſcience is better than a clear eſtate.

Never think a thought, ſpeak a word, or do a deed, but what you may be ſafe in ſetting about with the following preface. "O God my Maker "and Judge, I do not forget, that thou art "witneſs to what I am about."

Has

Has not faſhion a conſiderable ſhare in the charities of the age? Let every one, who gives, carefully conſider from what motives he acts.

If you have a well-diſpoſed mind, you will go into no company more agreeable, or more uſeful, than your own. All is not well with thoſe to whom ſolitude is diſagreeable.

It is no ſhame to learn. The ſhame is to be ignorant.

Forgive every body rather than yourſelf.

If you have health, a competency, and a good conſcience, what would you have beſides? Something to diſturb your happineſs?

To expect, young men, that your life ſhould be one continued ſeries of pleaſure, is to expect to meet with what no mortal, from *Adam* down to the preſent times, has yet met with; and what by the nature of things would be more ſtrange, than the throwing the ſame number with a die ten millions of times ſucceſſively.

When you hear in company, or read in a pamphlet, ſomewhat ſmart and lively, and quite new to you, urged againſt any opinion, or maxim allowed by men of the freeſt ſentiments, and moſt improved underſtandings; do not let yourſelf be immediately perverted by it. But ſuppoſe, that, though it may be new to you, it may have been often ſtarted and anſwered; and though you cannot at once confute it, others can. And make it your buſineſs, if the point be of conſequence, to find out thoſe, who can. Nothing is more

weak, than to be ſtaggered in your opinion by every trifle that may fall in your way.

Accuſtom yourſelf to think the greateſt part of your life already paſt; to contract your views and ſchemes, and ſet light by a vain and tranſitory ſtate, and all its vain enjoyments.

To feel old age coming on, will ſo little mortify a wiſe man, that he can think of it with pleaſure; as the decay of nature ſhews him that the happy change of ſtate, for which he has been all his life preparing himſelf, is drawing nearer. And ſurely it muſt be deſirable, to find himſelf draw nearer to the end and the reward of his labours. The caſe of an old man, who has no comfortable proſpect for futurity, and finds the fatal hour approaching, which is to deprive him of all his happineſs; is too deplorable for any words to repreſent.

It is eaſy to live well among good people. But ſhew me the man, who can preſerve his temper, his wiſdom, and his virtue, in ſpite of ſtrong temptation and univerſal example.

It is hardly credible what acquiſitions in knowledge one may make, by carefully huſbanding and properly applying every ſpare moment.

Are you content to be for ever undone, if you ſhould happen not to live till the time you have ſet for repentance? If ſo, put it off a little longer, and take your chance.

It is a ſhame, if any perſon poorer than you is more contented than you.

Strive

Strive to excel in what is truly noble. Mediocrity is contemptible.

Judge of books, as of men. There is none wholly faultleſs, or perfect. That production may be ſaid to be a valuable one, by the peruſal of which a judicious reader may be the wiſer and better; and is not to be deſpiſed for a few deficiencies, or inconſiſtencies.

Do not think of lying for the truth, or working the works of the Devil for God's ſake.

Honeſty ſometimes fails: But it is becauſe diligence or abilities are wanting. Otherwiſe it is naturally by far an over-match for cunning.

A bad reputation will lye a ſtumbling-block in your way to riſing in life, and will diſable you from doing good to others.

If ever you was dangerouſly ill, what fault or folly lay heavieſt upon your mind? Take care to root it out, without delay, and without mercy.

An unjuſt acquiſition is like a barbed arrow, that muſt be drawn backward with horrible anguiſh; elſe it will be your deſtruction.

To excel greatly in muſic, drawing, dancing, the pedantic parts of learning, play, and other accompliſhments rather ornamental than uſeful, is beneath a gentleman, and ſhews, that to acquire ſuch perfection in trifles, he muſt have employed himſelf in a way unworthy the dignity of his ſtation. The peculiar accompliſhments, in which a man of rank ought to ſhine, are knowledge of the world, acquired by hiſtory, travel, converſation,

converſation, and buſineſs; of the conſtitution, intereſt, and laws of his country; and of morals and religion; without excluding ſuch a competent underſtanding of other ſubjects, as may be conſiſtent with a perfect maſtery of the accompliſhments which make the gentleman's proper calling.

The meaneſt ſpirit may bear a flight affliction. And in bearning a great calamity, there is great glory, and a great reward.

A wiſe man will improve by ſtudying his own paſt follies. For every ſlip will diſcover ſome weakneſs ſtill uncorrected, which occaſioned his miſbehaviour; and will ſet him upon effectually redreſſing every failure.

There is ſomewhat arch in the *Roman* catholics putting their carnivals before Lent. Mirth is generally the prelude of repentance.

To be drawn into a fault ſhews human frailty. To be habitually guilty of folly ſhews a corrupt mind. To love vice in others is the ſpirit of a devil, rather than a man; being the pure, diſintereſted love of vice, for its own ſake. Yet there are ſuch characters.

Remember, your bottle-companions will not bear you company at your death; nor lighten your ſentence at the dreadful day of judgment. Let the vicious therefore go alone at preſent; ſince their company may heighten, but will not abate your puniſhment.

Proofs

Proofs of genuine repentance are, abſtaining from all temptations to the ſame vice; thorough reformation; and all poſſible reparation.

Take care of thoſe vices which reſemble virtues.

To abuſe the poor for his poverty is to inſult God's providence.

Seek virtue rather than riches. You may be ſure to acquire the firſt; but cannot promiſe for the latter. No one can rob you of the firſt without your conſent; you may be deprived of the latter a hundred ways. The firſt will gain you the eſteem of all good and wiſe men; the latter will get you flatterers enough; but not one real friend. The firſt will abide by you for ever; the latter will leave you at death, to ſhift, as you can, for eternity.

Moral truths are as certain as mathematical. It is as certain, that good is not evil, nor evil good, as that a part is leſs than the whole, or that a circle is not a triangle.

What matter what you know, if you do not know yourſelf?

It is pity that moſt people overdo either the active or contemplative part of life. To be contually immerſed in buſineſs, is the way to become forgetful of every thing truly noble and liberal. To be wholly engaged in ſtudy, is to loſe a great part of the uſefulneſs of a ſocial nature. How much better would it be, if people would

would temper action with contemplation, and uſe action as a relief to ſtudy?

You may eaſily know, whether you are in earneſt about reforming, and living virtuouſly. If you be, you will fly from every temptation to vice, and carefully purſue every help to virtue. As you may know whether you love money, by obſerving, whether you carefully purſue the means for getting and cautiouſly avoid occaſions of expence or loſs.

Never force nature. When ſtudy becomes a burden, give it over for that time. You will not improve by it, if it goes againſt the grain.

Preſerve, if you can, the eſteem of the wiſe and good. But more eſpecially your own. Conſider how deplorable a condition of mind you will be in, when your conſcience tells you, you are a villain.

It is not eating a great quantity of food, that nouriſhes moſt: Nor devouring of books, that gives ſolid knowledge. It is what you digeſt, that feeds both body and mind. Have your learning in your head; and not in your library.

You had better find out one of your own weakneſſes, than ten of your neighbour's.

There is only one ſingle object you ought to purſue at all adventures: That is virtue: All other things are to be ſought conditionally. What ſort of man muſt he be, who reſolves to be rich, or great, at any rate?

If

If you give only with a view to the gratitude of thoſe you oblige, you deſerve to meet with ingratitude. If you give from truly diſintereſted motives, you will not be diſcouraged or tired out by the worſt returns.

Rather be the bubble, than the biter.

Do your duty, if the world ſhould laugh. Obedience to the Almighty Governor of the univerſe, is what one would hardly think, ſhould draw ridicule upon a man. But however, if men will be ſo abſurd, as to laugh at you for what is your greateſt wiſdom; wait patiently the final iſſue, and then it will be ſeen who acted the ridiculous part.

If it ſhould be hard to do your duty, it is evidently not impoſſible. To mention none of the Chriſtian heroes, there is not a virtue which the Heathens have not ſhewn to be practicable. Do not pretend that a Chriſtian cannot be chaſte, when you know that young *Scipio* bravely reſiſted a moſt powerful temptation of that kind, in yielding to which, he would have acted only according to the cuſtom of thoſe times. Do not pretend that it is impoſſible for a Chriſtian to forgive injuries, when you know, that *Phocion*, going to ſuffer death unjuſtly, charged it upon his ſon, with his laſt breath, that he ſhould ſhew no reſentment againſt his father's perſecutors. Do not excuſe yourſelf in giving up the truth, through fear of offending thoſe, on whom you depend, when you know that *Attilius Regulus*

Regulus gave himſelf up to tortures, and death, rather than falſify his word even to his enemies. Let it not be ſaid that a Chriſtian, with his clear views of an over-ruling Providence, ſhall be overcome with affliction, or impiouſly murmur againſt the great diſpoſer of all things, when we find an *Epictetus*, ſunk in miſery and ſlavery, vindicating the Divine diſpoſal of himſelf, and ſubduing his mind to the diſpenſations of Providence. Do not excuſe yourſelf from a little expence, trouble, or hazard of ill-will, for the general good, when you know, that a *Leonidas*, a *Calpurnius Flamma*, the *Decii*, and hundreds more, voluntarily devoted themſelves to deſtruction, to ſave their country. If you pretend to be a Chriſtian, that is, to profeſs the moſt pure and moſt ſublime principles in the world, do not infamouſly fall ſhort of the perfection of un-enlightened Heathens.

If a temptation ſolicits, think whether you would yield to it, if you knew you ſhould die next day.

Be aſſured, whatever you may think now, when you come to a death-bed, you will think you have given yourſelf up too much to pleaſures, and other worldly purſuits, and be ſorry that you had ſo large a ſhare of them.

A good man has nothing to fear: A bad man every thing.

It is not eaſy to keep the mean between temporizing too much, and giving a proper teſtimo-

ny for decency and virtue, when one ſees them outraged.

Do not regard any perſon's opinion of you, againſt your own knowledge.

Obſerve, whether vice does not deform the moſt amiable perſons.

Cuſtom will have the ſame effect, with reſpect to death, as to other frightful things; it will take off its terror.

To underſtand a ſubject well, read a ſett of the beſt authors upon it; make an abſtract of it; and talk it over with the judicious.

There are no little ſins.

It is in any man's power to be contented; of very few to be rich. The firſt will infallibly make you happy; which is more than you can depend on from the latter.

He who begins ſoon to be good, is like to be very good at laſt.

Take care not to go to the brink of vice, leſt you fall down the precipice.

If you have, or have not, a chance for happineſs in the next life, it cannot ſignify much how you paſs the preſent. Would you pity a perſon, who was obliged to travel in bad weather, and put up with mean accommodations, as he was going to take poſſeſſion of a fine eſtate? Or would you envy one, who had a pleaſant day to go to execution?

If you have the eſteem of the wiſe and good, do not trouble yourſelf about the reſt. And if you

you have not even that, let the approbation of a well-informed conſcience make you eaſy in the mean while. Time will come, when you may command the other: I mean when you have had the public approbation of an infallible Judge before angels and men.

A good man gets good out of evil. A wicked man turns good to evil.

Faſhion ought to have no weight in matters of any greater conſequence than the cut of a coat, or a cap. Numbers do not alter right and wrong. If it ſhould be the faſhion of this world to act fooliſhly and wickedly, depend on it, the faſhion of the next will be, for virtue to be rewarded and vice to be puniſhed.

If you can find a place, where you may be hid from God, and your conſcience, do there what you will.

Obedience is the great leſſon to be taught children. It is what the All-wiſe Teacher would bring mankind to.

If you act only with a view to praiſe, you deſerve none.

Liſten to conſcience, and it will tell you, whether you really do as you would be done by.

Virtue in theory only, is not virtue.

That bad habits are not quite unconquerable, is evident from *Demoſthenes*, *Cicero*, and many others: But that they are very troubleſome to deal with, and grow always ſtronger and ſtronger, univerſal experience proves too ſufficiently.

Do

Don't deceive yourſelf: The true preparation for death, is not living at random to threeſcore, and then retiring from the world, and giving up a few of the laſt years of life to prayer and repentance: But cultivating in your mind, from the beginning, the ſubſtantial virtues, which are the true ornament of a worthy character, and which naturally fit for endleſs happineſs.

He only is truly virtuous, who would be ſo, if he had no proſpect of gaining more happineſs by virtue than vice: though at the ſame time, it is reaſonable, and commendable, to have a due reſpect to the recompence of reward, as things are at preſent conſtituted.

The lot of mankind upon an average is wonderfully equal. The diſtribution of happineſs is not ſo irregular, as appears at firſt view. There cannot indeed be any great inequality in the diſtribution of what is ſo inconſiderable as the temporal happineſs enjoyed by mankind. The contented, retired, and virtuous man has the beſt ſhare.

Who could imagine it poſſible to forget death, which every object puts one in mind of, and every moment brings nearer?

What a ſtrange condition a man muſt be in, whoſe judgment and practice are at variance. If a man does not perfectly agree with his wife, they can ſometimes avoid one another's company, and ſo be eaſy. But can one run away from himſelf?

Of all virtues, patience is oftneſt wanted. How unhappy muſt he be, who is wholly unfurniſhed with what is wanted every moment?

He, who endeavours to drown thought, and ſtifle conſcience, or who goes on in expenſive living, without looking into his affairs, is about as wiſe, as he who ſhould ſhut his eyes, and then run toward the precipice, as if his not ſeeing the danger would annihilate it.

That the ways of virtue are preferable to thoſe of vice, is evident, in that we do not find people in old age, ſickneſs, or on a death-bed, repenting, that they have lived too virtuouſly; but the contrary. This is a general confeſſion from mankind, at a time when they certainly are ſincere. And they would give the ſame teſtimony to virtue at other times, if they could diſengage themſelves from the prejudices and paſſions, which blind them.

A good man, when he comes to die, has nothing to do, but to die.

Perhaps no created nature could be happy, without having experienced the contraſt of unhappineſs.

As no character is more venerable than that of a wiſe old man, ſo none is more contemptible than that of an old fool.

It makes wretched work, when the married pair come to diſputing about privilege and ſuperiority.

There

There is nothing more fooliſh than for thoſe to fall out, who muſt live together, as huſband and wife, and ſuch near relations. But there is no falling out without folly on one ſide or other, or both.

The folly of ſome people in converſation, is beneath criticiſm. The only way of anſwering them, is to go out of hearing.

Conſider with yourſelf, whether the wife and good would value you more or leſs, than they do now, if they knew your whole character.

It is well when old people know that they are old. Many, on the contrary, ſtill affect to ſet themſelves off as unimpaired in abilities both bodily and mental, long enough after they have outlived themſelves.

It is neceſſary often to find fault. And the only way to do it, ſo as to be regarded, is to keep up your own dignity. A maſter, who bluſters and ſwears at his ſervant, is deſpiſed; while he who reproves with mildneſs and gravity is likely to be reverenced and obeyed.

What embitters the common accidents of life to moſt people is, their entertaining a fooliſh notion, that calamities are unnatural, and that we have a right to the pleaſures of life. Whereas the true ſtate of the caſe is, that affliction is what we greatly need, and richly deſerve, and that the pleaſures of life are the mere gift of God, which therefore he may with-hold, or beſtow as he ſees fit.

The uſe of reading is, to ſettle your judgment: not to confound it by a variety of opinions, nor to enſlave it by authority.

If you will not liſten to calm reaſon, take care leſt you be made to feel the rod of ſevere affliction. If God loves you, he will drive you from your follies, if you will not be drawn from them.

If you are ever ſo ſure that you ought to reſent an injury, at leaſt put off your reſentment, till you cool. You will gain every end better by that means, and can loſe nothing by going cautiouſly and deliberately to work; whereas you may do yourſelf, or your neighbour, great miſchief by proceeding raſhly and haſtily.

If you find, you cannot hold your own with the world, without making ſhipwreck of conſcience and integrity; retire in time, with a ſtock of honeſty, rather than continue in buſineſs, to retire at laſt with a ſtock of wealth, which will not yield you happineſs, when your integrity is gone.

The giver is the creditor; the receiver the debtor. Had you not better be the former than the latter?

Married people ought to conſider, that the keeping up of mutual love and peace, is of more conſequence, than any point, which either the one or the other can want to gain, where life or fortune are not engaged. Let the huſband conſider, that it ſuits his ſuperior wiſdom to yield to the

the weaker in ordinary caſes. Let the wife remember, ſhe ſolemnly promiſed to obey.

The devil is feared and hated.

The conſciouſneſs of having acted from principle, and without the praiſe, or privity, of any perſon whatever, is a pleaſure ſuperior to all that applauſe can yield.

Why do you deſire riches and grandeur? Becauſe you think they will bring happineſs with them. The very thing you want is now in your power. You have only to ſtudy contentment.

Don't be frighted, if misfortune ſtalks into your humble habitation. She ſometimes takes the liberty of walking into the preſence-chamber of kings.

Be open with prudence. Be artful with innocence: Wiſe as the ſerpent; harmleſs as the dove. If either of theſe two qualities muſt predominate, by all means let it be the latter.

It is a ſhameful wickedneſs, common in trade, to conceal the faults, or artfully heighten the good qualities, of what one wants to ſell, or to diſparage any article one has a mind to buy, in order to have it the cheaper. That trader, who cannot lay his hand upon his heart, and ſay, God, who knows all things, knows, I uſe my neighbour as I would wiſh to be uſed; is no other, in plain *Engliſh*, than a downright knave.

To love a woman merely for her beauty, is loving a corpſe for the ſake of its being covered

with a fair ſkin. If the lovely body has a bad ſoul in it, it becomes then an object of averſion; not of affection.

Never think yourſelf out of danger of a diſorder of body by ſickneſs, or of the mind by paſſion.

Thoſe, who have not courage to reſiſt faſhion, would ill reſiſt tortures.

Nothing can materially hurt you, but what hurts your virtue.

When we hear of one dead ſuddenly, we are ſurprized. Whereas the great wonder is, that a machine of ſuch frail materials, and exquiſite workmanſhip as the human body is, ſhould hold in motion for an hour together.

Let a man conſider what the general turn of his thoughts is. It is that which characteriſes the man. He who thinks oftneſt, and dwells longeſt, on worldly things, is an earthly man. He, whoſe mind is habitually employed in divine contemplation, is an heavenly man.

Abſolute reſignation to the divine diſpoſal, teaches neither to deſire to live, nor to die.

In proportion to the grief and ſhame, which a bad action would have cauſed you, ſuch will be your joy, and triumph, on reflecting, that you have bravely reſiſted the temptation.

Are not the great happieſt, when moſt free of the incumbrances of greatneſs? Is there then any happineſs in greatneſs?

Forgive

Forgive others, who have fallen, and be on your guard, leſt you yourſelf fall. The angels in heaven, and the firſt of our ſpecies in innocence, have fallen.

The hand of time heals all diſeaſes. Human nature cannot long continue in violent anger, grief, or diſtreſs of any kind. Spare yourſelf immoderate uneaſineſs. The time will come, when all theſe things, which now engage you ſo much, will be, as if they never had been; except your own character for virtue, or vice.

If you live ſuch a life, that you may be able, upon rational grounds, to be patient at the laſt hour, when your near friends loſe all patience, you will ſhew yourſelf a true hero.

Don't be uneaſy, if you cannot maſter all ſcience. You may eaſily know enough to be good and happy.

He who ſuffers luſt to ſteal away his youth, ambition his manhood, and avarice his old age, may lament too late, the ſhortneſs of the uſeful part of his life.

If you have a family, it is no more allowable, that you ſquander away your ſubſtance, than for a ſteward to embezzle the eſtate, of which he is manager. You are appointed ſteward to your children; and if you neglect to provide for them, be it at your peril.

A truly great mind, from mere reverence for itſelf, would not deſcend to think a baſe thought, if it was never to be known to God, or man.

This book is not likely to be read by any, whoſe ſtation in life is not ſuch, that thouſands, and millions of mankind would think worthy of envy. It will then be very ſtrange, if it ſhould be read by any diſcontented perſon.

He that has no ſhame, has no grace.

Before you think of retiring from the world, be ſure, that you are fit for retirement. In order to which it is neceſſary, that you have a mind ſo compoſed by prudence, reaſon, and religion, that it may bear being looked into; a turn to rural life; and a love for ſtudy.

He, who is free from any immediate diſtreſs, and cannot be happy now, it is in vain for him to think he ever ſhall, unleſs he changes the temper of his mind, which is what hinders his happineſs at preſent.

Do not grieve for him who is departed out of a troubleſome and dangerous ſtate into a better. If a relation, or an acquaintance, is gone into the other world, wholly unprepared for it, his caſe is truly lamentable.

The advantage our paſſions have over us, is owing to ourſelves. We may eaſily gain ſuch a knowledge of our own weakneſs, as to feel them riſing, before they be got to the heighth. And it is our own fault, if we do not reſtrain them in time.

The moſt violent ſhaking will not make the limpid water, in a glaſs, muddy. But a little diſturbance will defile that in the well, or river.

If

If it were not for the impurity in the mind itſelf, the ſhock of temptation would have no effect.

Whoever knows his own weakneſſes, and has the ſenſe to endeavour to get rid of them, will find himſelf as fully employed, in his own mind, as a phyſician in an hoſpital.

It may not be in your power to excel many people in riches, honours, or abilities: But you may excel thouſands in what is incomparably more valuable, I mean, ſubſtantial goodneſs of heart and life. Hither turn your ambition. Here is an object worthy of it.

Nothing is of any value to you, that you make a bad uſe of.

You cannot, you ſay, find time to examine yourſelf, whether you are prepared for death. It is no matter, you muſt find time to die.

It is no matter what you ſpend your life in, if you neglect the very buſineſs of life.

You may acquire great knowledge, and be the worſe for it at laſt.

Don't think of giving a ſhilling, while you owe a pound.

Shall hypocriſy get footing among Chriſtians? and ſhall a Heathen have the character of having rather deſired *to be* virtuous than to be *thought* ſo?

I know no ſight more nauſeous than that of a fond huſband and wife, who have not the ſenſe to behave properly to one another before company: Nor any converſation more ſhocking, than

that

that of a ſnarling couple, who are continually girding at one another.

Conſider, how uncommon it is to live to old age; and take care to hold yourſelf in conſtant readineſs for death.

The unthinking bulk of mankind are ever amuſing themſelves with ſome purſuit foreign to themſelves. A wiſe man is ever looking inward.

It is no wonder if he, who reads, converſes, and meditates, improves in knowledge. By the firſt, a man converſes with the dead; by the ſecond, with the living; and by the third, with himſelf. So that he appropriates to himſelf all the knowledge, which can be got from thoſe who have lived, and from thoſe now alive.

Let no man refuſe a pardon to others, but he who does not need it for himſelf.

A very ignorant man may have a very learned library. A very learned man may be a very contemptible creature.

If it were ſafe to put off repentance and reformation to the very laſt day of life; how do you know, that this is not it?

Endeavour to do all the good in your power. Be as active, with prudence, as if you was ſure of ſucceſs. When you meet a diſappointment, let it not abate your diligence, nor put you out of humour. And when you have done all, remember you have only done your duty.

The

The *Dutch* will not ſuffer the ſmalleſt breach in their dykes, for fear of an inundation. Do not you ſuffer the ſmalleſt paſſage for vice into your heart, leſt you find your virtue quite overflowed.

Do not be unhappy, if you have not married a profeſſed beauty. They generally admire themſelves ſo much, they have no love left for their huſbands. Beſides, it might not perhaps have been very agreeable to you, to ſee every fellow, as you went into public places, look at your wife, as if he could devour her with his eyes.

Take no counſel with fleſh and blood; if you aſpire at what is truly great.

A fooliſh youth makes a crazy old age.

Take care of natural byaſſes, as ſelf-love, pleaſure, &c. Be ſure, you will always incline enough toward the byaſs ſide. Therefore, you need have no guard upon yourſelf that way.

The angels are ſaid in Scripture to deſire to look into the Chriſtian ſcheme, as if to learn ſomewhat. Do not you then think it beneath you to learn, while you are ſo much inferior to them. The moſt knowing are the moſt deſirous of knowledge. The moſt virtuous the moſt deſirous of improvement in virtue. On the contrary, the ignorant think themſelves wiſe enough; the vicious are in their own opinion good enough.

In beſtirring yourſelf for the public advantage, remember, that, if you ſhould not accompliſh all that you propoſe, you will however have em-

ployed yourſelf to good purpoſe, and will not fail of your reward, if you ſhould of ſucceſs.

Let no man complain of the ſhortneſs of life, but he who can ſay, he has never miſpent one hour.

Make ſure, firſt, and principally, of that knowledge, which is neceſſary for you, as a man, and a member of ſociety. Next, of what is neceſſary in your particular way of life. Afterwards, improve yourſelf in all uſeful and ornamental knowledge, as far as your capacity, leiſure, and fortune will allow.

If you would not have affliction viſit you twice; liſten, at once, to what it teaches.

Never caſt your eye upon a good man, without reſolving to imitate him. Whenever you ſee an inſtance of vice or folly in another, let it be a warning to you, to avoid them.

Where is yeſterday now? With the years before the flood. But, if you have employed it well, it ſtands recorded above, to your eternal honour and advantage. If you have miſpent, or neglected it; it will appear againſt you at the laſt day.

Would you have one general univerſal remedy for all diſeaſes; ſtudy religion. The only rational ground of conſolation in the various diſtreſſes of life is the conſideration, that religion propoſes a poſitive reward for bearing with dignity, and improving by affliction, and that afflictions are

in truth our greateſt bleſſings, and proofs of the Divine favour.

If you unhappily fall into ſome fatal miſcarriage, which wounds your conſcience, and makes your life a burden; confeſs it, with all its circumſtances, to ſome judicious and tender-hearted perſon, in whoſe fidelity you can confide, and whoſe advice may be of ſervice to you. If it be of ſuch a peculiar nature, that you do not think it prudent to confeſs yourſelf guilty of ſuch a thing, ſend a full account of it, written in a diſguiſed hand, deſiring an anſwer in writing. When you have the opinion of a judicious perſon upon the heinouſneſs of your crime; which you may find, you have either, through ſelf-love, thought too ſlightly of, or, through an exceſſive tenderneſs of conſcience, blamed yourſelf too much for; impreſs your mind properly with a ſenſe of your fault; humble yourſelf deeply before God; and reſolve bravely no more to be guilty of ſuch folly. When you have done ſo, and find you can keep to your reſolutions, it is not neceſſary that you continue to afflict yourſelf without end for what is irrecoverably paſt. The principal part of repentance is reformation.

I know no way of laying out a few ſhillings to more advantage, either for profit or pleaſure, than upon an entertaining and inſtructing book. But this expence is greatly overdone by ſome, and ill laid out by others.

While

While you are unhappy, becauſe your taylor has not cut your coat to your mind, many an honeſt man would be glad to have one that would only keep out the cold; and cannot. While you are in a paſſion with your cook, becauſe he has ſpoiled you one diſh among ſix, many a poor family, who are your fellow-creatures, and fellow-Chriſtians, are at a loſs for bread, to ſupply the wants of nature. Think of this, and give over with ſhame, your fooliſh and impious complaints againſt that goodneſs of Providence, which has placed you in circumſtances ſo much above perſons of equal merit with yourſelf.

It is the unhappineſs of human life, that in every man's conduct there has always been ſome miſcarriage, or ſome misfortune in his circumſtances, which has prevented his carrying his improvements in knowledge, and virtue, the length which might have been wiſhed, or imagined. To make the moſt of life, ſuch a number of concurrences are neceſſary, that it is no wonder they ſeldom all fall to the ſhare of any one perſon. Health, long-life, fortune; great and various natural abilities, and a good diſpoſition; an extenſive education, begun early; indefatigable diligence to carry on improvements; a ſett of acquaintance capable of aſſiſting in the purſuit of knowledge, and of encouraging in virtue; and happening to live in an age favourable to freedom of enquiry. If we conſider the improvements, ſome towering geniuſſes have made in knowledge,

and

and the lengths gone in exemplary virtue by many, who have laboured under innumerable diſadvantages, we cannot help lamenting, that they were not favoured by Providence with the others, nor imagining what immenſe heights they muſt, in ſome circumſtances, have reached. The moſt remarkable concurrence of all kinds of advantages, that ever was; and the moſt ſtupendous effects in conſequence of it, will probably, as long as this world laſts, be the admiration, and delight, of all who are judges of the ſublime labours of the greateſt of philoſophers, and beſt of men, the glory of our country, and of human nature. Yet even in him (though a ſort of ſuperior being, when compared with the reſt of the ſpecies) it is poſſible to imagine ſome circumſtances different, and to the advantage. To what heights then may our nature riſe in future ſtates, when every poſſible advantage ſhall concur!

Do not pretend to neglect or trifle with your duty, unleſs you have found out unqueſtionable and demonſtrative proof, that the general ſenſe of mankind in all ages and nations, that virtue is the perfection of human nature, and the ſure way to happineſs, and vice the contrary; is a groſs abſurdity and falſhood; that the Bible is a fogery; and that the belief of a judgment to come is a dream. If you be not as ſure of all this, as that twice two are four, if there be the ſmalleſt poſſibility that it may be otherwiſe, it is the very deſperation of madneſs to run the leaſt hazard of

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the deſtruction of your ſoul by living a wicked life.

Death-bed repentance, and death-bed charity are much of a kind. Men give up their vices and their money, when they can keep them no longer.

Can any perſon ſeriouſly think that he was formed capable of reaſon, virtue, and religion, only to eat, drink, divert himſelf, and die?

Accuſtom yourſelf to the ſtrict obſervance of your duty in all reſpects, and it will in time be as troubleſome to omit, or to violate it, as it is to many people to practiſe it.

Study to grow every day wiſer and better. For every day brings you nearer to death.

It is ſtrange to hear unthinking people deſcant upon the actions of men of univerſally acknowledged abilities, and to ſee them take it for granted, that they have acted a part entirely inconſiſtent with their known characters; which people very rarely do, and which it is therefore very unreaſonable to ſuppoſe. If you were told of a miſer's having done a generous thing, would you not be apt either to doubt the fact, or to conclude, that it muſt have appeared to him a likely way of getting ſomewhat? If you were told of a very paſſionate man's bearing an inſult with exemplary patience; would you not be ſurprized? Why then ſhould you raſhly give into the belief, that a perſon, whoſe good underſtanding you are apprized of, has played the fool? or one, whoſe integrity

integrity is known to you, has acted a treacherous part? Hear the accuſed before you condemn.

Value learning as much as you pleaſe. But remember, a judicious thinker is incomparably ſuperior to a great reader.

What can be more monſtrous than the common excuſes for unfaithfulneſs to the marriage-bed? People give their vows to one another in the moſt ſolemn manner; and then their firſt work is to think how to break them. They marry for better for worſe; for richer or poorer, younger or older; handſomer or plainer. And then, when they come to repent of their raſh choice, they pretend to excuſe the breach of ſolemn vows by the pretext of defects they find in one another; of which it is wholly their own fault if they were not ſufficiently apprized before their coming together.

To defeat calumny, 1. Deſpiſe it. To ſeem diſturbed about it, is the way to make it be believed. And ſtabbing your defamer will not prove you innocent. 2. Live an exemplary life. And then your general good character will overpower it. 3. Speak tenderly of every body, even of your defamers, and you will make the whole world cry, Shame on them, who can find in their hearts to injure one ſo inoffenſive.

You ſay, your misfortunes are hard to bear. Your vices are likewiſe hard to be forgiven. Is it terrible to think of your ſuffering pain, ſickneſs, poverty, or the loſs of dear friends or relations?

It is more terrible to think of your having offended the infinitely great and good Creator, Preſerver, and Judge of the world, your kind and bountiful Father and beſt Friend. Is pain a great evil? Vice is a greater. It is rebellion againſt the Supreme authority of the univerſe. Is the loſs of a beloved wife like tearing limb from limb? So is falſhood, cruelty, or ingratitude like unhinging the univerſe, and bringing chaos back again. For they tend to univerſal diſorder, and the deſtruction of the creation of God. Do you ſhudder at the thought of poverty or diſeaſe? Think with what eye infinite Purity muſt behold wickedneſs; with what abhorrence abſolute Perfection muſt ſee the ruin produced in his works by irregularity and vice. Do you deſire to eſcape miſery? Fly from ſin. Do you wiſh to avoid puniſhment? Above all things avoid wickedneſs, the cauſe of it.

THE DIGNITY OF HUMAN NATURE.

BOOK IV.

Of REVEALED RELIGION.

INTRODUCTION.

THAT it is in itſelf agreeable to rectitude, neceſſary to the dignity of human nature, and the requiſite concurrence of moral agents with the general ſcheme of the Governor of the univerſe, that we ſtudy above all things to perform our whole duty, viz. Taking proper care of our bodies and of our minds, loving our fellow-creatures as ourſelves, and loving and ſerving our Creator; that this is our indiſpenſable duty, and that the habitual neglect, or violation of it, upon whatever pretence, will expoſe us to the Divine diſpleaſure, as the conſcientious obſervance

of it is moſt likely to gain us his favour, and conſequently final happineſs; all this appears clear to human reaſon, ſeparate from any conſideration of the truth of revelation, and deducible from univerſally acknowledged principles. And if it may be ſuppoſed in the loweſt degree probable, that the kind and merciful Parent of his creatures, who would have all men to be ſaved, and, in a conſiſtency with eternal and immutable rectitude, to come to that happineſs, of which their nature was formed capable; if it may be conceived in the loweſt degree probable, that God ſhould from the beginning have ordered things ſo, that one method, among others, for promoting univerſal goodneſs and happineſs, ſhould be, the appearance of an expreſs meſſage, or revelation from himſelf, with a ſett of clearer and more ſtriking inſtructions, than had been any other way communicated to mankind; if this be conceivable without any direct abſurdity, then is it likewiſe evident from the principles of natural religion, or reaſon, that it is the indiſpenſable duty of all thoſe of our ſpecies, to whom any ſuch ſuppoſed Divine meſſage, or revelation, may be offered, to beſtow the utmoſt diligence in examining its pretenſions, and, if found ſufficient, to admit them with candor and ſincerity of mind, and to receive the revelation itſelf with that veneration and ſubmiſſion, which it becomes dependent creatures to expreſs to Him who ſent it.

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That there is nothing directly abſurd, or contradictory to reaſon, in the ſuppoſition of the poſſibility of a revelation given from God, for the reformation and improvement of mankind, is evident from its having been the opinion, and the hope, of the wiſeſt and beſt of mankind, in all ages, and various nations. *Socrates*, *Plato*, *Confucius*, and others, the bright and burning lights of antiquity, have given their authority to the opinion of the probability of a revelation from God. They have declared, that they thought it an affair of great conſequence to rekindle the light of reaſon, almoſt extinguiſhed by vice and folly; to recall a bewildered race of beings into the way of virtue, to teach mankind, with certainty and authority, how they ought to behave toward their Creator, ſo as to obtain his favour, and the pardon of their offences. They, who were the beſt qualified, of all uninſpired men of thoſe antient times, for inſtructing mankind, were ready to own themſelves inſufficient for the taſk of reforming the world. And it is notorious, that their worthy labours were in no reſpect adequate to the univerſal, or general amendment of manners, even in the countries in which they lived, and taught. For that themſelves greatly wanted inſtruction, appears plainly from what they have writ upon ſome of the moſt important points of morals, as the immortality of the ſoul; the nature, degree, and continuance of the rewards and puniſhments of

the future ſtate, and the means of obtaining the pardon of ſin. And that their leſſons ſhould have any conſiderable or powerful influence upon the people in general, was not to be expected; as they could at beſt but give them, as their opinions; reaſonable indeed, and clear in the main, to any underſtanding, which ſhould take the trouble to examine; but backed with no authoritative ſanction, or Divine atteſtation, to command attention and obedience.

It is evident, that, as there can be, on one hand, no merit in believing what is true, even religious truth, without examination (for nothing is virtuous, or praiſe-worthy, that is irrational; and it is irrational to receive for truth what one has no ſolid reaſon to think is true) ſo on the other, to reject truth, eſpecially religious truth, on any indirect or diſingenuous account, or for any reaſon, beſides ſome unſurmountable inconſiſtency in the doctrine, or deficiency in the evidence, is perverſe and wicked. The faith, therefore, that is acceptable to God, who is alike the Author of both reaſon and revelation, is that rational reception of religious truth, which ariſes from candid and diligent examination, and a due ſubmiſſion to Divine authority. And the unbelief, which is condemned in Scripture, is that rejection of the revealed will of God, which is owing to prejudice, negligence, pride, or a fatal attachment to vice.

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The guilt of wilfully rejecting or oppoſing Divine truth muſt be more or leſs atrocious, according as the advantages for enquiry, and ſatisfaction upon the ſubject, are greater, or leſs. The inhabitants of the dark and barbarous parts of the world, and even of the countries, which are over-run by popiſh ſuperſtition, will therefore be found much more excuſable for their deficiencies both in faith and practice, than we of this enlightened age, and nation, who enjoy every imaginable advantage for free enquiry, and labour under no kind of byas either toward credulity or the contrary, but what we chooſe to ſubject ourſelves to.

Beſides our being indiſpenſably obliged in point of duty to take the utmoſt care, that a genuine revelation from God do not meet with neglect, much leſs diſingenuous oppoſition, from us; it is alſo to be conſidered, what conduct wiſdom preſcribes in ſuch a caſe. Were there no guilt in treating revelation with contempt, or oppoſition, yet no man of prudence would wilfully deprive himſelf of any probable advantage for information and improvement, from whatever quarter it might come. Nor will any wiſe man think lightly of a ſcheme intended, as Divine revelation is, for the important ends of republiſhing, with a ſett of authoritative ſanctions, the religion of nature, and fixing beyond all diſpute the duty of mankind, and the means for attaining their greateſt happineſs; and for communi-

cating to them various important truths not known before, nor diſcoverable by human reaſon. That revelation has effectually done theſe things will appear by the general view of it, that will be exhibited in the ſecond ſection.

A direct, explicit law, given by Divine authority, is the very thing which ſuch a ſhort-ſighted, and imperfect order of beings as mankind, were peculiarly in want of. Nor is any method ſo fit for governing a ſett of creatures generally unqualified for reaſoning out, with proper clearneſs and certainty, the means of attaining happineſs, as a diſtinct ſyſtem of rules of conduct guarded by proper ſanctions. Is not all human government conſtituted on that foundation? When a new ſtate or colony is to be ſettled, do the founders truſt to the reaſon of a mixed multitude for the obſervance of equity, the ſecurity of property, and happineſs of the whole? And was it not a more effectual way to lead mankind to the love of God, and one another, to give them an expreſs law to that purpoſe, than to leave it to their own reaſonings, to find out their duty to their Creator, and to one another, and whether they might trifle with it, or reſolve faithfully to perform it? Therefore mankind have, probably, in no age been wholly left to their own reaſon: but a ſtanding poſitive inſtitution has all along been kept up in one part of the world, or other; and would in all probability have been more univerſally, as well as more conſpicuouſly eſtabliſh-

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ed; but for the wickedneſs of mankind, which rendered them unworthy of partaking univerſally of this bleſſing, and occaſioned its being imparted to them in a more obſcure and limited manner.

We are at preſent in a ſtate of diſcipline; and every thing is intended as a part of our trial, and means of improvement. Revelation may be conſidered in the ſame light. A meſſage from heaven is brought to our ears, attended with ſuch evidences, as may be ſufficient to convince the unprejudiced mind of its being genuine; but at the ſame time not ſo aſcertained, but that pretences for cavilling at, and oppoſing it, may, by diſingenuous men, be found. If this gives an opportunity for the exerciſe of honeſt enquiry, and exhibits in the faireſt light, the different characters of the ſincere, but cautious, and inquiſitive lover of truth; of the indolent, unthinking, and credulous, who believes with the multitude; and of the perverſe and diſingenuous, who rejects whatever is not ſuitable to his ways of thinking or living; if revelation does theſe things, is it not to be reckoned one of the nobleſt trials of the preſent ſtate? And is it not promulgated in the very manner it ought to have been.

Standing oracles were probably ſome of the firſt methods which the Divine wiſdom made uſe of to communicate particular expreſs informations to mankind. There was an appointed place, to which

which worſhipers reſorted, and conſulting, received anſwers, and directions. Spiritual beings were employed in revealing the Divine will to mankind. And in viſions and dreams, communications were given to men of characters eminent for virtue and piety. A race of prophets, or perſons under divine influence, ſucceeding to one another, ſo as there ſhould be no long period without one or more ſuch inſpired men, kept up an impreſſion of the ſuperintendency of God, and of the neceſſity of obedience to Him. But we know of no method ſo proper for communicating to mankind in general, a ſett of uſeful informations; ſo as to be of laſting, conſtant, and extenſive advantage to them, as their being committed to writing, by which means they are eaſily acceſſible to all, to be conſulted at all times and in all places.

The revelation, therefore, with which we are bleſt, has been, by the Divine providence directed to be penned by *Moſes*, the prophets, and apoſtles; and has been wonderfully preſerved for many ages, free, for any thing we know, or have reaſon to ſuſpect, from material corruptions and alterations; and in it we have all informations neceſſary for our conduct here, and happineſs hereafter.

Whoever chooſes to enlarge the ſphere of his enquiry as wide as poſſible, may examine the ſeveral ſchemes of religion, which have pretended to a Divine original, and by comparing them together

together, he will ſoon find which bears the characters of being truly from heaven.

As to us, who live in theſe happy realms of knowledge and freedom of enquiry, the religion contained in the Scripture of the Old and New Teſtaments offers itſelf more immediately, and challenges our chief and moſt attentive examination; it is therefore evident, that it lies immediately upon us, to enquire into its pretenſions; and that we may more ſafely neglect all the others; none of which the Divine providence has given us ſo fair an opportunity of examining, or made ſo clearly our duty to enquire into. But to enquire into religion in an impartial manner, a man muſt begin with ſhaking off all prejudice, from education and general opinion, and muſt ſuppoſe himſelf a mere unprincipled *Indian*, not byaſſed to any ſpecies of religion in the world. He muſt likewiſe reſolve to go through the whole of what he is to examine; not contenting himſelf with a partial and imperfect view of things, which is the way to acquire imperfect and miſtaken notions. He muſt alſo go directly to the fountain, if he would know the true virtues of the water of life; that is, he muſt, to know the religion of the Scriptures, go directly to the Scriptures, and ſtudy them more than all the ſyſtems or bodies of divinity in the world.

There is no greater hindrance to the candid examination and ready reception of ſo pure and ſtrict a ſcheme of religion as the Chriſtian, than a fatal

a fatal attachment to vice. This was the original obſtacle, which retarded its eſtabliſhment in the world, at its firſt appearance; has prevented its progreſs ever ſince; has diſguiſed and deformed its native beauty; has almoſt wholly defeated its genuine intention, in one church; and raiſed enemies againſt it, even in this land of light, in an age immediately ſucceeding to the times, in which it ſtood the examination of the ableſt enquirers, and came out eſtabliſhed upon a more rational foundation, than ever it ſtood upon, from the apoſtolic age downwards. It will therefore be neceſſary, above all things, for the enquirer into the truth of Chriſtianity, to purge his mind from every corrupt affection, that may prompt him to wiſh to find it ſuſpicious or falſe; to take no counſel with fleſh and blood; but to labour to work himſelf up to that pitch of heavenly-mindedneſs, which it requires; that ſo he may not only be wholly unprejudiced againſt it, but may be diſpoſed to liſten to reaſon in its favour, and may find within himſelf a witneſs to its truth.

SECT. I.

Previous Objections againſt a Revelation in general, and that of Scripture in particular, conſidered.

A Revelation had not been given to mankind, had there been no need of it, in ſuch a ſenſe as that it muſt prove wholly uſeleſs. But

the queſtion is, whether it is not an abſurdity to talk of a genuine revelation's being needleſs, or uſeleſs. Can any thing be ſaid to be needleſs, or uſeleſs, that is calculated to improve mankind? If a ſett of moral inſtructions from one perſon will be of any ſervice to me, can it be ſaid, that more of the ſame kind will be uſeleſs? If I had already digeſted all the knowledge, that is to be got in books, and by converſation with the wiſe and learned of my own ſpecies, would the converſation of a ſuperior being be needleſs and uſeleſs to me? Nay, if the archangel Gabriel had it in his power to receive ſome new informations by revelation from God, would he neglect them, as needleſs and uſeleſs, becauſe his knowledge is already immenſely extenſive? Thoſe objectors to revelation, who talk of its being unneceſſary, do not ſeem to have clear ideas to their words. For if they had, they never would think of limiting the Divine goodneſs to his creatures, or of alledging, that their advantages for happineſs were too great. Nor would one think that revelation ſhould ever have been looked on as ſuperfluous, by any perſon who knew the world; but on the contrary, that all ſuch would readily acknowledge, that if it were poſſible to have yet another additional revelation, or advantage for virtue, mankind would not then be at all too good. Nor can any one help ſeeing the real eventual advantage of revelation, who knows any thing of the difference between the condition, as to knowledge

knowledge and virtue, of thoſe ages and nations, which have, and thoſe which have not enjoyed the light of it. And here it is to be remembered, that in all probability it is a very ſmall part of our knowledge that is the genuine acquiſition of mere human reaſon, wholly unaſſiſted. The very uſe of letters ſeems to have pretenſions to a greater author than *Cadmus*, or than *Moſes*. And probably the whole of the religious knowledge we poſſeſs, is originally owing to revelation.

The deplorable darkneſs and ignorance, in which thoſe of our ſpecies are found involved, who have lived detached from the reſt of mankind, and have never enjoyed, or have wholly loſt, all traces of revealed knowledge (if that be really the caſe of any people, which is to be doubted) is a proof of the advantage of revelation. And it is only from what we find to be the caſe of thoſe newly diſcovered nations, who have undoubtedly few ſupernatural advantages, that we can fairly judge, what the ſtate of mankind in general would have been, if the ſpecies had been left wholly to themſelves. For, as to this ſide of the globe, it is to be queſtioned, if there ever was any people upon it, who could be ſaid to be in a perfect ſtate of nature, as will afterwards appear.

The deſpiſers of revealed religion, on account of the all-ſufficiency of human reaſon, are deſired to conſider the following proofs of its

boaſted ſufficiency in matters of both belief and practice.

The only account we have of the antediluvian manners, is that given by *Moſes*, viz. That all fleſh corrupted their ways to ſuch a degree, as to render it neceſſary to purify the earth by a general deluge. Of the patriarchal times the only accounts we have are likewiſe from the ſame venerable writer; which ſhew the people of thoſe ages, except a few families, to have been wholly given to polytheiſm and idolatry. The deſtruction of the five cities by fire from heaven, for the moſt abominable and unnatural crimes, ſhews the ſtate of corruption to which the people of thoſe times were ſunk. The accounts we have from *Herodotus* and *Diodorus Siculus*, of the religion of the *Egyptians*, the fathers of wiſdom and learning, are the diſgrace of human reaſon. Their worſhipping the moſt contemptible and hateful animals, as crocodiles, ſtorks, cats, monkies, and calves; to kill which ſacred animals, was death by their law, and which they carefully embalmed, and ſolemnly depoſited in tombs; and their adoration even of plants, as leeks and onions; theſe are ſtrange inſtances of the ſufficiency of reaſon for judging in religious matters. They alſo (according to the ſame author) allowed of theft; and made marriages between brothers and ſiſters a part of religion. What were all the popular religions of the *Pagans* in general, but a heap of abſurdities? What can be ſaid of their deities;

deities; whoſe characters were too ſhocking, for men and women of ſuch manners to be ſuffered to live among us? And leſt there ſhould be any want of ſuch hopeful objects of worſhip, they multiplied them to ſuch a number, that *Varro* reckons up a little army of them, and *Lucian* repreſents the heavens as in danger of being broke down with the weight of ſuch a multitude. The horrid practice of appeaſing them with human blood, and even with that of the children of the zealous votaries themſelves, with the abominable impurities aſcribed to them, and practiſed by their blind worſhipers in honour of them, ſhew what notions of the object, and nature of worſhip, human reaſon, left to itſelf, is apt to run into. Thoſe, who had better notions of the ſuperior powers, repreſent them as either quarrelling and fighting (*Homer* makes his goddeſſes treat one another with the language of *Billingſgate*) or as a ſett of idle luxurious voluptuaries, ſpending their whole time in quaffing of nectar, wholly regardleſs of human affairs. In ſome antient nations, every young woman was obliged to proſtitute herſelf in the temple of *Venus*, as a religious ceremony. *Thucydides* ſays, that both *Greeks* and *Barbarians* thought robbery and plunder glorious. The whole antient heroiſm was indeed little elſe. And it was chiefly by violence and brutal fury, that the *Macedonian*, *Roman*, and other ſtates acquired ſuch an extent of dominion. From *Homer*, and other writers, down to the *Roman* hiſtorians,

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we ſee how the manners of antient times allowed to treat captives in war. Princes and princeſſes were dragged in triumph after the chariot of the conqueror; and they, and the inferior people, by thouſands, butchered in cold blood, or condemned to ſlavery. The beautiful part of the female captives ſhared among the heroes, and condemned to proſtitution, and infamy. The laws of *Lycurgus* were founded in war and ſavage heroiſm, and allowed ſtealing, unleſs the perſon was caught in the fact. Adultery was alſo in certain caſes eſtabliſhed by law. Expoſing of children was, among the *Romans*, according to *Lactantius*, a daily practice. Gladiators butchering one another by thouſands, was the reigning diverſion among thoſe lords of the world for ages. And it was common, when one had got the other down, for the conqueror to look at the people for their orders, whether to ſpare, or kill him, which they often gave for the latter; and even the ladies, if we may believe their own writers, would often give the ſignal to diſpatch a poor, conquered, helpleſs victim, that they might feaſt their ſavage and unwomanly hearts with ſcenes of cruelty and blood. The authors of the *Grecian* wiſdom were almoſt all addicted to one vice or other, ſome more, ſome leſs ſcandalous. Their ſnarling, and impudence, got them the appellation of *Cynics*; and diſputes about words run through all their writings. Too many of both *Greek* and *Roman* philoſophers, or wiſe men, flattered the vices of

princes. *Socrates* himſelf, the father of wiſdom, and oppoſer of polytheiſm, encouraged to conſult the oracles, and to offer ſacrifice to idols. *Plato's* morals were ſo obſcure, that it required a life-time to underſtand them. *Cicero* excuſes and countenances lewdneſs in ſome parts of his writings. And thoſe of *Seneca* are not without their poiſon. What were the manners of the polite court of *Auguſtus* (to ſay nothing of the ſea of blood, through which he ſwam to the imperial throne) is pretty evident from the abominable and unnatural filthineſs ſcattered through the writings of the wits of that elegant age. Which of the antient ſages did not too far temporize, and conform to the national ſuperſtition, contrary to their better knowledge, and even make that worſt ſpecies of diſſimulation a part of the duty of a good citizen; the conſequence of which was the effectual rivetting of error, and prevention of reaſonable enquiry, and reformation. It is certain, that whole nations have placed virtue on directly oppoſite ſides; and that the wiſe antients differed in their notions of what the chief good of man conſiſted in, to ſuch a degree, that one author reckons up ſeveral hundred different opinions on the ſubject. This ſhews that the underſtanding, or moral ſenſe, though ſufficient, when illuminated by Divine revelation, to judge of truth, is not, for all that, capable of ſtriking out of itſelf ſufficient light, ſafely to guide itſelf, eſpecially overwhelmed and oppreſ-

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ſed as it is by vice and prejudice. The moſt ſublime of the Heathen philoſophers never put the immortality of the ſoul (the foundation of all religion) out of doubt. On the contrary, they repreſent it as at beſt only a very deſirable ſcheme. Of a general reſurrection of the body, an univerſal public judgment, and final happineſs of the whole human nature, ſoul and body, in a ſtate of everlaſting glory, it does not appear that they had any clear notions; or that they carried their views beyond the *Elyſian* ſtate. None o them could ſatisfy a thinking mind about the proper means for propitiating the Deity, or whether guilt was likely to be pardoned at all; nor could any of them preſcribe an acceptable method of addreſſing the Object of worſhip. On the contrary, *Plato* repreſents the wiſe *Socrates* as at a full ſtop, and adviſing not to worſhip at all, till ſuch time as it ſhould pleaſe God to inform mankind, by an expreſs revelation, how they might addreſs him acceptably. Nor did any of them ſufficiently inculcate humility, the foundation of all virtues. On the contrary, the very ſchemes of ſome of the ſects were rather founded in pride and obſtinacy. Nor did any of them go ſo far as to ſhew that forgiving injuries, loving enemies, and ſetting the affections upon the future heavenly ſtate, were abſolutely neceſſary. The utmoſt that any of them did, was to recommend the more ſublime virtues to the practice of

ſuch perſons as could reach them. So much for the Heathen doctrines and morals.

Mahomet is known to have abandoned himſelf to luſt all his life long. His impoſtures were ſo groſs, that when he firſt broached them, his beſt friends were aſhamed of both him and them. His religion ſets up on the foot of direct violence and force of arms, and makes ſenſual gratifications, to the moſt exceſſive degree of beaſtlineſs, the final reward of a ſtrict attachment to it. The *Koran*, ſo far as it is an original, is a heap of abſurd doctrines, and trifling or bad laws. The few miracles which *Mahomet* pretends to have performed, are either things within the reach of human power, or are hideous and incredible abſurdities, or are wholly unatteſted.

The papiſts, who pretend to be Chriſtians; but have in fact forged a religion of their own; have they done any honour to the opinion of the all-ſufficiency of reaſon in matters of religion? Let every one of their peculiar doctrines be examined, and let it be conſidered what advantage it is of to mankind for regulating their belief, and practice. Their invocation of ſaints, who ought to be omnipreſent, to hear their prayers; which, according to their own account of the matter, they are not. Their purgatory, out of which the prieſt can pray a ſoul at any time for money, which muſt defeat the very deſign of a purgatory. Their penances, pilgrimages, fines, abſolutions, and indulgences; whoſe direct tendency

dency is to lead the deluded votaries of that curſed ſuperſtition into a total neglect of the obligations of virtue, defeating the very end of religion. The infallibility of their popes, while one thunders out bulls and decrees directly contrary to thoſe of another. And, laſt and worſt (for it is endleſs to enumerate the abſurdities of popery) that moſt hideous and monſtrous of all productions of the human brain, tranſubſtantiation, which at once confounds all ſenſe, overturns all reaſoning, and renders all truth precarious and uncertain. Theſe are the triumphs of reaſon; theſe the productions of human invention, when applied to making of religions.

Upon the whole, from this brief and imperfect repreſentation of the ſtate of thoſe parts of the world which have enjoyed but a very little of the light of genuine Divine revelation, (for it is to be doubted, whether any was ever wholly without it) and of thoſe which have wickedly extinguiſhed, or fooliſhly forſaken it, from this very brief repreſentation, I ſay, human reaſon, unaſſiſted from above, ſhews itſelf ſo far from ſufficient for leading mankind in general into a completely right belief and practice, that in almoſt every point, beyond mere ſimple right and wrong, it miſleads into error, or falls ſhort of truth. As the naked eye, though very fit for directing our way on earth, yet miſrepreſents, through its weakneſs, every celeſtial object; ſhews the ſun no bigger than a chariot-wheel,

the moon flat like a plate of ſilver, and the planets like lucid points. The ſame eye ſtrengthned by a teleſcope ſees the ſun, and moon, and planets, large, and globular, as they really are. Revelation is that to reaſon, which a teleſcope is to the eye; an advantage and improvement. As he, who would ſee the wonders of the heavens, arms his eye with a teleſcope, ſo does the judicious enquirer into religious truth, apply to revelation for thoſe informations, which reaſon alone would never have given, tho' it judges of, and approves them, when given. And as the aſtronomer does not think of putting out his eye, in order to ſee better with a teleſcope, ſo neither does the judicious advocate for revelation deſire to oppoſe it to reaſon, but to examine it by reaſon, and to improve his reaſon by it.

The abominable prieſt-craft, and horrid perſecution and bloodſhed, which have been the diſgrace of a religion, whoſe diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic is benevolence, is no confutation of what I have been advancing in ſupport of the natural tendency and actual good effects upon a great number of mankind, of pure religion; and only ſhews that even a Divine appointment may be perverted to the purpoſe of eſtabliſhing the kingdom of Satan. At any rate, the abuſe of revelation is no better objection againſt revelation, than that of reaſon (of which every hour preſents us various inſtances) is againſt reaſon; which no body

body ever thought of urging, as an argument that it was not of Divine original.

The diſputes among the many different ſects of Chriſtians, which have rendered it very difficult for thoſe, who ſearch for the doctrines of revealed religion, any where, but in the Bible itſelf, to ſettle their judgment upon many points; thoſe diſputes are no juſt objection againſt revelation, any more than againſt every branch of human ſcience whatever; upon every one of which, not excepting even the pure mathematics, controverſies have been raiſed. A revelation, upon which it ſhould be impoſſible for deſigning, ſubtle men to raiſe diſputes, is hardly conceivable; or, however, is altogether inconſiſtent with the idea of a contrivance intended for the improvement of a ſett of free, moral agents; who muſt be expected to treat revelation, as well as every other kind of information, according to their reſpective capacities, and tempers of mind.

If it has been alledged, that for God to have recourſe to a direct meſſage, or revelation, for reforming or improving mankind, or ſupplying the deficiencies of reaſon, looks like a defect in the make of the creature; and that reaſon ought alone to have been made originally equal to the purpoſe of enabling mankind to ſecure their final happineſs; the anſwer is eaſy, to wit, That if human reaſon were ſuppoſed more equal to the purpoſe for which it was given, than it is, a re-

velation might ſtill be of great advantage. And that to ſuppoſe an expreſs contrivance for mending the moral world neceſſary, or uſeful, is no more unphiloſophical, or, to ſpeak properly, more unworthy of God, than one for the ſame purpoſe, in the natural world. And this latter is by our great philoſopher allowed to be probable.

Suppoſing it reaſonable to believe that the Divine power, either immediately, or by means of the intervention and inſtrumentality of inferior agents and cauſes, does continually actuate the natural world, and conduct the moral; is not this a continued interpoſition? Why then ſhould the thought of an extraordinary interpoſition on an extraordinary occaſion, in order to a great and important end, be ſo difficult to conceive? At any rate, what muſt thoſe gentlemen, who are ſo ſtartled at the notion of an extraordinary ſtep taken by the infinitely wiſe and abſolutely free Governor of the world; what muſt they ſay of the creation of the univerſe? Did the univerſe come into exiſtence by ſettled laws of nature? Is there any law of nature by which nothing becomes ſomething? And does that law take place at ſuch and ſuch preciſe times, and no other? Let the oppoſers of extraordinary interpoſitions make the moſt of that difficulty, they muſt acknowledge ſomewhat extraordinary, as they chooſe to call it, to take place now and then in the univerſe on occaſion of the

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creation of a world. And it does not appear to me, that the reſtoration, or (as it may be called) making a-new a world, is of much leſs conſequence, or leſs worthy of a particular interpoſition, than the firſt creation of it.

But after all, what is it thoſe gentlemen puzzle themſelves with? Are they ſure, that in order, the giving a poſitive revelation to mankind, and the reſtoration of a world by means of ſuch an inſtitution as the Chriſtian, there is any thing to be done out of, or contrary to, the common courſe of things? Can they be poſitive, that there never was, or will be, any ſcheme, analogous to this, contrived for any other order of beings in the univerſe? To affirm this, would be about as judicious as the opinion of the vulgar, that thunder is an immediate expreſſion of the Divine diſpleaſure, and that comets are ſent on purpoſe to give notice of impending judgments. Whereas a little knowledge of nature ſhews, that, whatever moral inſtructions thoſe phænomena are in general fitted to communicate at all times to mankind, the cauſe of them is part of the mere conſtitution of nature. And who can ſay, that ſuperior beings may not have ſuch extenſive views of the auguſt plan of the Divine government, as to ſee the whole ſcheme of revealed religion in the ſame light?

Nor are there wanting various particulars, in the Divine government of the moral world, analogous, in a lower ſphere, to the grand ſcheme

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of revelation. How much are we in the preſent ſtate dependent on others for various advantages ſpiritual and temporal? What gift of God do we receive without the interpoſition of ſome agent? How are parents, teachers, ſpiritual paſtors, and guardian-angels, made the channels of the Divine goodneſs to us? Is there not in this ſomething ſimilar to our receiving the ineſtimable advantages of the perfect knowledge of our duty, the pardon of our ſins, and all the bleſſings which religion beſtows, through the channel of a Mediator between God and us? Our Saviour's taking upon himſelf certain ſufferings, by which we are to gain great advantages, is by no means foreign to the common courſe of the world, in which we ſee very great hazards run, and actual inconveniences ſuffered, by friends and relations for one another. He and his apoſtles allow of this analogy.

In the common courſe of things, thoughtleſsneſs and folly, which though not innocent, are yet pitiable, are the cauſes of very terrible misfortunes; and are therefore in many caſes provided for by the goodneſs of the wiſe Governor of the world, ſo that they do not always prove irretrievable. A thoughtleſs perſon, by intemperance, runs himſelf into a quarrel, in which he is wounded. Without help, he muſt periſh. And it is not to be expected, that he ſhould be miraculouſly recovered. Is it not the Divine goodneſs, which has furniſhed the materials neceſſary for his cure, made proviſion in the for-

mation of the human body for the accidents it might be liable to, ſo that every hurt ſhould not prove fatal to it; and engaged us to be kind and helpful to one another; ſo that we ſhould be ſure of comfort from one or other in our diſtreſs? In the ſame manner, and by the ſame goodneſs, exerted in a higher degree, revelation teaches us, a remedy is provided for the recovery to the Divine mercy (in a conſiſtency with the wiſdom and rectitude of his moral government) of a fallen, offending order of beings. In the caſe of the unfortunate perſon here exemplified, his being convinced of his folly; his being heartily concerned for it; and his reſolving never more to be guilty of the like, is not ſufficient for his recovery; any more than repentance and reformation alone could be ſuppoſed ſufficient to put offenders on a footing with innocent beings.

Natural ends are produced by natural means; ſo are moral. Natural means are many of them ſlow, and ſeemingly unpromiſing, if experience did not ſhew their fitneſs. It may therefore be concluded, and hoped, that the deſign of giving a revelation to mankind, however unpromiſing of extenſive ſucceſs, will eventually, and upon the whole, be gained, in ſuch a meaſure as it may not be wholly defeated. Natural means come ſhort, in ſome particular inſtances, of their direct and apparent ends; as in abortions of all kinds in the animal and vegetable world. In the ſame manner it is to be feared, that all the moral means

means uſed by Divine goodneſs, for the reformation of mankind, and revelation among the reſt, will, through their perverſeneſs, come greatly ſhort of the direct end, the happineſs of the ſpecies; though it ſhall not be in the power of all created beings to prevent the ſecondary and more indirect intention of the Divine moral inſtitutions.

Some oppoſers of revelation have run themſelves into a great many difficulties by forming to themſelves a ſett of groundleſs and arbitrary notions of what a revelation from God ought abſolutely to be, which not taking place according to their theory, they have concluded againſt the credibility of revelation; than which nothing can be imagined more raſh and unreaſonable, to ſay the leaſt. They have, for example, laid it down for an infallible poſition, that a truly divine revelation muſt contain all poſſible kinds and degrees of knowledge. But finding that the modern aſtronomy, and other ſciences, have no place in Scripture, or that the expreſſions in thoſe antient books do not always ſuit the true philoſophy, they conclude that Scripture is not given by inſpiration. But when it is conſidered, that the deſign of revelation was not to make men philoſophers, it may very well be ſuppoſed, that the ſpirit, which conducted it, did not ſee it neceſſary to inſpire the ſacred penmen with any knowledge not directly neceſſary for improving mens hearts and lives. Finding ſome inconſider-

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able variations in the hiſtorical accounts, as of our Saviour's reſurrection, and other particulars, they conclude, that the narration is not authentic; for that inſpiration muſt have prevented any ſuch variation in the accounts of the different writers. But it is to be remembered, that the meaſure of inſpiration muſt be ſuppoſed to have been limited; that every ſingle article and ſyllable was not neceſſary to be expreſsly inſpired; that where the human faculties of the writers were in the main ſufficient, it was not to be ſuppoſed inſpiration ſhould interpoſe; and that revelation was deſigned to be perfect (as all things with which we have to do at preſent) only to a certain degree.

The want of univerſality is an objection of the ſame kind. But if the conſideration of the true religion's not being communicated alike to all mankind, proves any thing againſt it, the ſame objection lies againſt reaſon. For it is given to men in ſuch different meaſures, as almoſt to render it doubtful whether they ought not to be pronounced of different ſpecies. Nor is there any injuſtice in the different diſtribution of gifts and advantages; if we take in the due allowance made for thoſe differences in the final judgment. If a *Hottentot* be hereafter judged as a *Hottentot*, he ought as much to own the juſtice of his ſentence as a *Newton*, when judged as a philoſopher.

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Could we have formed any juſt notion what the meaſure of human reaſon, what the reach of human ſagacity, ought to have been? Whether it ought to ſhine forth in its greateſt brightneſs at firſt, or to come to its maturity by ſlow degrees; whether it ought in its exertion to be wholly independent on the body, or if it ſhould be liable to be diſordered with the diſorder of the corporeal frame; whether it ought to be always equal, or weak in youth and in extreme old age. Who would have thought the ſeemingly precarious faculty of invention a proper method for improving arts and ſciences! Who would have thought that writing and printing could ever have been made the means of carrying human knowledge to the height we know they have done? If we find that Divine wiſdom can, by the moſt unpromiſing cauſes, produce the greateſt effects, and that hardly any thing is conſtituted in ſuch a manner as human wiſdom would beforehand have judged proper, why ſhould we wonder if we cannot reconcile the ſcheme of Divine revelation to our arbitrary and fantaſtical views, which, for any thing we know, may be immenſely different from thoſe of the Author of revelation?

With all our incapacity of judging beforehand what revelation ought to have been, it does not follow, that we may not be ſufficiently qualified to judge of its evidence, and excellence, now it is delivered. And that is enough to determine

us to what is right, and ſafe for us, I mean, to pay it all due regard. For in all caſes, it is our wiſdom to act upon the beſt probability we can obtain.

A ſupernatural ſcheme contrived by Divine wiſdom, an expreſs revelation from God, may well be expected to contain difficulties too great for human reaſon to inveſtigate. The ordinary oeconomy of nature, and providence, is founded in, and conducted by, a ſagacity too deep for our penetration, much more the extraordinary parts, if ſuch there are, of the Divine government. In the works of nature, it is eaſy for men to puzzle themſelves and others with difficulties unſurmountable; as well as to find objections innumerable; to ſay, Why was ſuch a creature or thing made ſo? Why was ſuch another not made in ſuch a particular manner? The ways of providence are alſo too intricate, and complex, for our ſhallow underſtandings to trace out. The wiſdom, which guides the moral, as well as that which framed the natural ſyſtem, is Divine; and therefore too exquiſite for our groſs apprehenſions. Even in human government, it is not to be expected, that every particular, in every law or regulation, ſhould give ſatisfaction to every ſubject, or ſhould be perfectly ſeen through by individuals at a diſtance from the ſeat of government. Which is often the cauſe, eſpecially in free countries, of moſt unreaſonable and ridiculous complaints againſt what

what is highly wiſe and conducive to the general advantage. But in enquiring into nature, providence, and revelation, one rule will effectually lead us to a proper determination, to wit, To judge by what we know; not by what we are ignorant of. If in the works and ways of God, in nature, providence, and revelation, where comprehended by us, we find a profuſion of wiſdom and goodneſs exhibited in the moſt perſpicuous and ſtriking manner; is any thing more reaſonable, than to conclude, that if we ſaw through the whole, we ſhould perceive the ſame propriety in thoſe parts which are intricate, as we now do in the cleareſt. And it has been the peculiar fate of revelation, much more than either of the other two, to be oppoſed on account of ſuch difficulties in it, as ariſe from our weakneſs. Eſpecially, it has very rarely happened, that the exiſtence of God, and the doctrine of his being the Creator of the world, has been queſtioned merely on account of any difficulties in tracing out the wiſdom of any part of the conſtitution of nature. And yet, it would be as rational to argue, that there is no God, becauſe the brutes have in ſome inferior reſpects the advantage of the lord of this lower world; as to queſtion the truth of revealed religion, after examining its innumerable evidences, preſumptive, and poſitive, merely becauſe we may think it ſtrange, that the Saviour of the world ſhould die the death of a criminal.

Here

Here it is proper to enter an expreſs caveat againſt whatever may pretend to the ſacred character of a point of faith or religion, and on that pretence elude, or baffle reaſon. There can nothing be imagined to be intended for the uſe and improvement of reaſonable minds, which directly, and explicitly contradicts reaſon. If reaſon and revelation be both the gifts of God, it is not to be expected, that they ſhould oppoſe one another; but that they ſhould tally, as both coming from the ſame wiſe and good Author. Whatever therefore is an expreſs abſurdity, or contradiction, we may be well aſſured, can be no genuine doctrine of revealed religion, but a blundering invention of weak, or deſigning men. It is one thing for a point of revealed religion to be, as to its *modus*, above our reach, and quite another matter, for a doctrine to be clearly contradictory to human underſtanding. That the direct connection in the nature of things betwixt the death of Chriſt and the ſalvation of mankind, ſhould be utterly inexplicable by human reaſon, is no more than what might have been expected, and, if unqueſtionably a doctrine of revealed religion, is to be received without heſitation, upon the credit of the other parts which we underſtand more perfectly. But, that on a prieſt's muttering a few words over a wafer, it ſhould immediately become a whole Chriſt, while at the ſame time it is certain, that if a little arſenic had been put into the compoſition of it, it

would have effectually poiſoned the ſoundeſt believer; and while we know that there can be but one whole Chriſt, though the papiſts pretend to make a thouſand Chriſts in a day; this is not to be conſidered as a difficult or myſterious point, but as a clear, expreſs contradiction both to ſenſe and reaſon.

It is alſo proper here to mention, that whatever doctrine of religion (ſuppoſing it to be really genuine) is beyond the reach of human underſtanding, cannot be imagined neceſſary to be received, any farther than underſtood. For belief cannot be carried the leaſt degree beyond conception. And it is to be remembered, that a doctrine may be contained in Scripture, and yet not a neceſſary point of faith. For example, it is ſaid in Scripture, that the angels deſire to look into the ſcheme of the redemption of mankind. But nobody has ever thought of making an article of faith, neceſſary to ſalvation, That we are to believe, that the angels are intereſted in the ſcheme of our redemption. Unleſs Scripture itſelf expreſsly declares a doctrine neceſſary to be received, we cannot, without raſhneſs, pretend to pronounce it abſolutely neceſſary to be believed in any preciſe or determinate ſenſe whatever.

It has been objected againſt the ſcheme of revelation which is received among us, That great part of the precepts contained in it, are ſuch, as appear at firſt view agreeable to ſound reaſon; whereas it might have been expected (ſay thoſe objectors, or rather cavillers) that

every

every article in it ſhould be quite new and unheard-of. At the ſame time, the ſame gentlemen think proper likewiſe to object, That many of the Scripture-expreſſions are very different from thoſe uſed by other antient authors. So that it is, it ſeems, an objection againſt Scripture, That *it is* what it might have been expected to be; and that *it is not* what it might have been expected to be.

To the former of theſe cavils it may be briefly anſwered, That the general agreement between reaſon and revelation, ſhews both to be of Divine original; while revelation's being an improvement and addition to reaſon *, ſhews its uſefulneſs and expediency. The latter difficulty will vaniſh on conſidering that many of the Scripture expreſſions are viſibly accommodated to human apprehenſion, while others on the ſame ſubjects are raiſed to a ſublimity ſuitable to the nature of the thing; by which means the narroweſt mind receives an information ſuitable to its reach, while the moſt elevated conception is enlarged by views of the nobleſt and moſt ſublime nature. Thus, to mention only one inſtance at preſent, the meaneſt reader of Scripture is ſtruck with fear of One, whoſe eye is quick and piercing, to ſearch the hearts, and try the reins, of the children of men, and whoſe hand is powerful, and his out-ſtretched arm mighty, to ſeize and puniſh offenders. At the ſame time the profound phi-

* See Page 307.

loſopher is in the ſame writings informed, that God is a ſpirit filling heaven and earth, and not contained within the limits of the heaven of heavens, but inhabiting immenſity and eternity, in whom all live and move, and have their being; neceſſarily inviſible, and altogether unlike to any of his creatures; having neither eyes, nor hands, nor paſſions like thoſe of men; but whoſe ways are infinitely above our ways, and his thoughts above our thoughts. Thus the Scripture language is ſuch, as that of a revelation, intended for the improvement of men of all different degrees of capacity, ought to be. It is, in ſhort, fit for the uſe of a whole ſpecies.

That the Old Teſtament particularly, which is the only book extant in that language, ſhould be ſo well preſerved, and underſtood as it is, ſo long after the *Hebrew* has ceaſed to be a living language; that we ſhould at this time be able to make out a regular hiſtory, and a ſett of conſiſtent thoughts and views, from writings of ſuch antiquity; is much more to be wondered, than that there ſhould be found in them difficulties, ſeeming contradictions, and thoughts or expreſſions different from thoſe found in productions of a later date. But above all things, that the thoughts and expreſſions in Scripture ſhould ſo far exceed in ſublimity all other compoſitions, ſeems unaccountable upon every other ſcheme, but their being of Divine original. Of the truth of this

this aſſertion, let the following inſtance, among innumerable others, ſerve as a proof.

The loftieſt paſſage, in the moſt ſublime of all human productions, is the beginning of the eighth book of *Homer's* Iliad. There the greateſt of all human imaginations labours to deſcribe, not a hero, but a god; not an inferior, but the ſupreme god; nor to ſhew his ſuperiority to mortals, but to the heavenly powers; and not to one, but to them all united. The following is a verbal tranſlation of it.

" The ſaffron-coloured morning was ſpread " over the whole earth; and *Jupiter*, rejoicing " in his thunder, held an aſſembly of the gods " upon the higheſt top of the many-headed " *Olympus*. He himſelf made a ſpeech to them; " and all the gods together liſtened.

" Hear me, all ye gods, and all ye goddeſſes, " that I may ſay what my ſoul in my breaſt " commands. Let not therefore any female " deity, or any male, endeavour to break thro' " my word; but all conſent together, that I " may moſt quickly perform theſe works. " Whomſoever, therefore, of the gods I ſhall " underſtand to have gone by himſelf, and of " his own accord, to give aſſiſtance either to the " *Trojans* or the *Greeks*, he ſhall return to " *Olympus* ſhamefully wounded; or I will throw " him, ſeized by me, into dark hell, very far " off, where the moſt deep abyſs is under the " earth; where there are iron gates, and a

" brazen threſhold, as far within hell, as hea-
" ven is diſtant from the earth. He will then
" know, by how much I am the moſt powerful
" of all the gods.

" But come, try, O ye gods, that ye may all
" ſee. Hang down the golden chain from
" heaven, hang upon it, all ye gods, and all
" ye goddeſſes; but ye ſhall not be able to
" draw from heaven to the ground *Jupiter* the
" great counſellor, though ye ſtrive ever ſo
" much. But when I afterwards ſhall be wil-
" ling to draw, I ſhall lift both the earth itſelf,
" and the ſea itſelf. Then I ſhall bind the chain
" round the top of *Olympus*, and they ſhall all
" hang aloft. For ſo much am I above gods
" and above men."

With this moſt maſterly paſſage of the greateſt maſter of the ſublime, of all antiquity, the writer, who probably had the greateſt natural and acquired advantages of any mortal for perfecting a genius; let the following verbal tranſlation of a paſſage from writings penned by one brought up a ſhepherd, and in a country where learning was not thought of, be compared; that the difference may appear. In this compariſon, I know of no unfair advantage given the inſpired writer. For both fragments are literally tranſlated; and, if the critics are right, the *Hebrew* original is verſe, as well as the *Greek*.

" O Lord, my God, thou art very great!
" Thou art clothed with honour and majeſty!

" Who

" Who covereſt thyſelf with light, as with a " garment: who ſtretcheſt out the heavens like " a canopy. Who layeth the beams of his " chambers in the waters: who maketh the " clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the " wings of the wind. Who maketh his angels " ſpirits; his miniſters a flame of fire. Who " laid the foundation of the earth, that it ſhould " not be moved for ever. Thou coveredſt it " with the deep, as with a garment: the waters " ſtood above the mountains. At thy rebuke " they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they " haſted away. They go up by the mountains; " they go down by the vallies unto the place " thou haſt founded for them. Thou haſt ſet a " bound, that they may not paſs over; that " they turn not again to cover the earth.

" O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In " wiſdom haſt thou made them all. The earth " is full of thy riches. So is the great and wide " ſea, wherein are creatures innumerable, both " ſmall and great. There go the ſhips. There " is that leviathan, which thou haſt made to " play therein. Theſe all wait upon thee, that " thou mayſt give them their food in due ſea- " ſon. That thou giveſt them they gather. " Thou openeſt thy hand: they are filled with " good. Thou hideſt thy face: they are " troubled. They die, and return to their duſt. " Thou ſendeſt forth thy ſpirit: they are " created; and thou reneweſt the face of the

" earth. The glory of the Lord ſhall endure
" for ever. The Lord ſhall rejoice in his works.
" He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth.
" He toucheth the hills; and they ſmoke. I
" will ſing unto the Lord as long as I live. I
" will ſing praiſe unto my God, while I have
" my being."

I appeal to every reader, whether the former of theſe two fragments is not, when compared with the latter, a ſchool-boy's theme, a capucinade, or a Grubſtreet ballad, rather than a production fit to be named with any part of the inſpired writings. Nor is it only in one inſtance, that the ſuperiority of the Scripture ſtyle to all human compoſitions appears. But taking the whole body of ſacred poeſy, and the whole of profane, and conſidering the character of the *Jehovah* of the former, and the *Jupiter* of the latter, every one muſt ſee the difference to be out of all reach of compariſon. And, what is wonderfully remarkable, Scripture poeſy, though penned by a number of different hands, as *Moſes*, *David*, *Iſaiah*, *Jeremiah*, and the reſt, in very diſtant ages, gives a diſtinct and uniform idea of the Supreme being, no where deviating into any thing mean, or unworthy of him; and ſtill, even where he is ſpoke of in a manner ſuited to the general apprehenſion of mankind, his dignity and majeſty duly kept up. Whereas there is not one of the antient Heathen poets, who gives a conſiſtent idea of the Supreme God, or

keeps up his character throughout. *Homer*, in the ſame poem, deſcribes his *Jupiter* with a great deal of majeſty, and in another repreſents him as deceived by his wife *Juno*, and overcome with luſt and ſleep, while the inferior deities are playing what tricks they pleaſe, contrary to his intention. In ſhort, the ſupreme God is by *Homer* deſcribed as a bully; by *Virgil*, as a tyrant; by *Ovid*, as a beaſtly voluptuary; and by *Lucretius*, as a lazy drone. So that, if the cavils of the oppoſers of revelation, with reſpect to the ſtyle of Scripture, were of much more conſequence than they are; it would ſtill be the eaſieſt, and indeed the only rational way of accounting for the amazing ſuperiority of thoſe writings to the greateſt human productions, in ſpite of the diſadvantages, of want of learning, and the like, which the ſacred penmen laboured under; to aſcribe the ſentiments in them to Divine inſpiration.

Other objections, as, that the genuineneſs of ſome of the books of the Bible has been diſputed; thoſe of various readings; of ſeeming contradictions; of doubtful interpretations; of obſcurity in the Scripture chronology, and the like; all theſe difficulties are ſufficiently cleared up by the learned apologiſts for revealed religion. Nor does it ſuit the purpoſe of this work to obviate all objections. Nor is it indeed neceſſary for the candid equirer into the truth of Divine revelation, to attend to the various difficulties

ſtarted

ſtarted by laborious cavillers. It is of very ſmall conſequence, what circumſtantial difficulties may be raiſed about a ſcheme, whoſe grand lines and principal figures ſhew its author to be Divine; as will, it is preſumed, appear to every ingenuous mind, on a careful peruſal of the following general view of the whole body of revelation. Some other objections are occaſionally obviated in other parts of this fourth book; and for a full view of the controverſy between the oppoſers and defenders of revealed religion, the reader may conſult the authors on that ſubject, recommended vol. I. page 193. In whoſe writings he will find full anſwers to the moſt trivial objections; and will obſerve, that the cavils ſtarted from time, to time by the deiſtical writers, have all been fully conſidered, and completely anſwered over and over; ſo that nothing new has been, for many years paſt, or is likely ever to be, advanced on the ſubject.

SECT. II.

A compendious View of the Scheme of Divine Revelation.

HOLY Scripture comprehends (though penned by a number of different authors, who lived in ages very diſtant from one another) a conſiſtent and uniform ſcheme of all things that are neceſſary to be known and attended to by mankind. Nor is there any other original writing

writing beſides, that does this. It preſents us with a view of this world before its change from a chaos into an habitable ſtate. It gives us a rational account of the procedure of the almighty Author in forming and reducing it into a condition fit for being the ſeat of living inhabitants, and a theatre for action. It gives an account of the origination of mankind; repreſenting the firſt of the ſpecies as brought into being on purpoſe for diſcipline and obedience. It gives a general account of the various diſpenſations and tranſactions of God with regard to the rational inhabitants of this world; keeping in view throughout, and no where loſing ſight of, the great and important end of their creation, the training them up to goodneſs and virtue, in order to happineſs. Every where inculcating that one grand leſſon, which if mankind could but be brought to learn, it were no great matter what they were ignorant of, and without which all other knowledge is of no real value; to wit, That obedience to the Supreme Governor of the univerſe is the *certain*, and the *only* means of happineſs; and that vice and irregularity are both naturally and judicially the cauſes of miſery and deſtruction. It ſhews innumerable inſtances of the Divine diſpleaſure againſt wickedneſs; and in order to give a full diſplay of the fatal conſequences of vice, it gives ſome account, either hiſtorically or prophetically, of the general ſtate of this world in its various periods from the time of its being

made

made habitable from a chaos, to its reduction again to a chaos by fire, at the conſummation of all things. Comprehending moſt of the great events which have happened, or are yet to happen, to moſt of the great empires and kingdoms, and exhibiting in brief moſt of what is to paſs on the theatre of the world. Setting forth to the view of mankind, for their inſtruction, a variety of examples of real characters the moſt remarkable for virtue, or wickedneſs, with moſt ſignal and ſtriking inſtances of the Divine approbation of, or diſpleaſure againſt them.

It is only in Scripture, that a rational account of this world is given. For in Scripture it is repreſented as God's world. The inhabitants of it are every where ſpoken of, as no other way of conſequence, than in the view of their being his creatures, formed for religion, and an immortal ſtate of happineſs after this life, and at preſent under laws and rules of diſcipline, to train them up for the great end of their being. Even in the mere hiſtorical parts, there is always an eye to the true ſtate of things. Inſtead of informing us, that one prince conquered another, the Scripture account is, that it pleaſed God to deliver the one into the hand of the other. Inſtead of aſcribing the revolutions of kingdoms and empires to the counſels of the wiſe, or the valour of the mighty, the Scripture account of them is, that they were the effect of the Divine diſpoſal, brought about by Him, "in whoſe hand

"are

" are the hearts of kings, who turns them which " way he pleaſes; and who puts one down, and " ſets another up; who does in the armies of " heaven, and among the inhabitants of the " earth, whatever ſeems good to Him, and " whoſe hand none can ſtay, or ſay, What doſt " thou?" The view given in Scripture of our world, and its inhabitants, and their affairs, is that which muſt appear to an eye obſerving from above, not from the earth. For Scripture alone gives an account of the original cauſes of things, the true ſprings of events, and declares the end from the beginning; which ſhews it to be given by one who ſaw through all futurity, and by the ſame, who has been from the beginning at the head of the affairs of the world, who governs the world, and therefore knew how to give an account (ſo far as to his wiſdom ſeemed fit to diſcover) of the whole current and courſe of events from the creation to the conſummation.

We have no where, but in Scripture, a diſplay of the wonders of Divine mercy for a fallen guilty race of beings. We have no rational account any where elſe of a method for reſtoring a world ruined by vice. In Scripture we have this great *deſideratum*. Holy Scripture ſhines forth conſpicuous by its own native heavenly ſplendor; Enlightning the darkneſs, and clearing the doubts, which, from the beginning of the world, hung upon the minds of the wiſeſt and beſt of men, with reſpect to the important points, of the

moſt

acceptable manner of worſhiping God; of the poſſibility of gaining the Divine favour and the pardon of ſin; of a future ſtate of retribution; and of the proper immortality, or perpetual exiſtence of the ſoul: Giving more clear, rational, and ſublime notions of God; teaching a more perfect method of worſhiping and ſerving Him; and preſcribing to mankind a diſtinct and explicit rule of life, guarded with the moſt awful ſanctions, and attended with the moſt unqueſtionable evidences, internal and external, of Divine authority. Bringing to light various important and intereſting truths, which no human ſagacity could have found out; and eſtabliſhing and confirming others, which, though pretended to have been diſcoverable by reaſon, yet greatly needed ſuperior confirmation. Not only enlightening thoſe countries, on which its direct beams have ſhone with their full ſplendour; but breaking through the clouds of heathenism and ſuperſtition, darting ſome of its Divine rays to the moſt diſtant parts of the world, and affording a glimmering light to the moſt barbarous nations, without which they had been buried in total darkneſs and ignorance as to moral and religious knowlege. Drawing aſide the veil of time, and opening a proſpect into eternity, and the world of ſpirits. Exhibiting a ſcheme of things incomparably more ſublime than is any were elſe to be found; in which various orders of being, angels, archangels,

thrones,

thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, riſe in their ſeveral degrees, and tower above one another toward the perfection of the Divine nature; in compariſon of which, however, they are all as nothing. Holy Scripture, in a word, takes in whatever of great, or good, can be conceived by a rational mind in the preſent ſtate; whatever can be of uſe for raiſing, refining, and ſpiritualiſing human nature; for making this world a paradiſe, and mankind angels; for qualifying them for that eternal bliſs and glory, which was the end of their being. And it is highly probable, that while the world ſtands, learned and inquiſitive men will be from time to time diſcovering new wonders of Divine wiſdom in that inexhauſtible treaſure. The continual improvement of knowledge of all kinds, and the farther and farther completion of prophecy, give reaſon to expect this. They, who know what amazing lights have been ſtruck out by *Mede*, *Locke*, and a few others who have purſued their plan, will readily agree, that, as a centtury or two paſt have ſhewn us the Bible in a light, in which it was probably never ſeen before, ſince the apoſtolic age; ſo a century or two to come may (if mankind do not give over the ſtudy of Scripture) exhibit it in a light at preſent inconceivable.

That it may in a ſatisfactory manner appear, how important the ſubjects, how wide the extent, and how noble the diſcoveries of Scripture are; it may be proper to trace the outlines of the vaſt

and

and various proſpect it exhibits, I mean, to range in order the principal ſubjects of revelation, as they lie in the holy books. This I will endeavour to draw out of the Bible itſelf, in ſuch a manner as one wholly a ſtranger to our ſyſtems and controverſies, and who had ſtudied Scripture only, might be ſuppoſed to do it.

Holy Scriptue begins with informing us, that God was the author and creator of the univerſe; which truth is alſo conſiſtent with human reaſon; and the direct conſequence to be drawn from it is, That all creatures and things are his, and that all thinking beings ought to dedicate themſelves to his ſervice, to whom they owe their exiſtence, and whatever they have, or hope for. As the almighty Creator is a pure ſpirit, wholly ſeparate from matter, or corporeal organs of any kind, it is evident, that what he produces, he does by an immediate act of volition. His power reaching to the performance of all poſſible things, nothing can reſiſt his will. So that his willing, or deſiring a thing to be, is producing it. His ſaying, or thinking, *Let there be light*, is creating light.

Scripture informs us, that the human ſpecies begun in two perſons, one of each ſex, created by God, and by himſelf put directly in the mature ſtate of life; whereas all the particulars of the ſpecies, who have been ſince produced, have been created indeed by God, but introduced into human life by the inſtrumentality of parents.

We

We learn from Scripture, that the firſt of our ſpecies were brought into being, not only in a ſtate of innocence, or capacity for virtue, but likewiſe naturally immortal, being bleſt with conſtitutions ſo formed, that they would of themſelves have continued uninjured by time, till it ſhould have been thought proper to remove the ſpecies to a new and more ſpiritual ſtate.

The appointment of one day in ſeven, as a day of reſt; the ſanctifying a ſeventh part of our time to religious purpoſes, was an ordinance worthy of God; and the account we have in Scripture of its having been appointed ſo early, by Divine authority, and as a law for the whole world, explains how we come to find the obſervance of a ſeventh day as ſacred, by univerſal cuſtom, mentioned in ſuch antient writers as *Homer*, *Heſiod*, and *Callimachus*. Nor can any appointment be imagined more fit for keeping up an appearance of religion among mankind, than this. Stated ſolemnities, returning periodically, have, by the wiſdom of all, law-givers, been thought the beſt expedients for keeping up the laſting remembrance of remarkable events. And it is evident, that no event better deſerved to be kept in remembrance than that of the completing of the work of creation; till ſuch time as the work of redemption, the ſecond and beſt creation of man, was completed in the reſurrection of the Saviour of the world. Upon which the

firſt Chriſtians ſanctified the firſt day of the week, and, according to the beſt authority now to be had, the ſeventh likewiſe; though neither with the ſtrictneſs required by the *Moſaic* conſtitution; but with that decent liberty, with which Chriſtianity makes its votaries free.

The deſign of creating the human ſpecies, was to put them in the way toward ſuch a happineſs as ſhould be fit and ſuitable to the nature of free moral agents. This rendered it neceſſary to place them in a ſtate of diſcipline; the only poſſible method for learning virtue; and we accordingly find a leſſon of obedience* preſcribed them immediately on their coming into exiſtence. A law, to all appearance very eaſy to keep. Only to abſtain wholly from one particular indulgence, being at liberty, within the bounds of moderation, with reſpect to others. In the ſtate of things at that time, it would not have been eaſy to preſcribe a particular trial, which ſhould not turn upon the government of paſſion or appetite. Being the only two on the face of the earth, they could not be guilty of a breach of duty to fellow-creatures. And with the frequent intercourſe, Scripture gives us reaſon to think, they had with angels, and celeſtial beings, they could hardly bring themſelves to any poſitive violation of their duty to God; and were under

* This point is not here ſtated as the author now thinks it ought. See the Note in page 58, of this Volume.

no temptation to neglect it. That they ſhould fall into this fatal tranſgreſſion of the firſt law given for trial of their obedience, was to be expected from beings newly created, and wholly unexperienced and unprincipled. Thus we ſee, that young children have no fixt principles ſufficient to prevent their yielding to temptation: for virtue is an attachment to rectitude, and abhorrence of all moral evil, ariſing from reaſon, experience, and habit. But though this, and other deviations from obedience, were to be expected from the firſt of mankind, it does not follow, that ſuch deviations were wholly innocent. Pitiable undoubtedly their caſe was, and the rather, in that they were miſled by temptation from a wicked being more experienced than themſelves. Accordingly their caſe, and that of the reſt of the ſpecies, has found ſuch pity, and ſuch interpoſitions have been made in their favour, as we have reaſon, from Scripture, to ſuppoſe other offending orders of beings, particularly the fallen angels, have not been favoured with. For it is expreſsly ſaid, that nothing equivalent to the Chriſtian ſcheme of reſtoration and ſalvation has been planned out in favour of them; but that they are left to the conſequences of their diſobedience.

The natural tendency of the leaſt deviation from moral rectitude is ſo dreadfully and extenſively fatal, as to render it highly neceſſary, that the righteous Governor of the world ſhould inflict

ſome ſignal and parmanent mark of his diſpleaſure on the occaſion of the firſt tranſgreſſion of the firſt of the ſpecies. As a wiſe father, who has found his child once guilty of a breach of truth, or any other foul crime, ſeems at firſt to diſbelieve it, and then puniſhes him with the loſs of his favour for a very long time after, and otherwiſe; in ſuch a manner as may be likely to make a laſting impreſſion on his mind, and deter him from a repetition of his fault. Scripture informs us, accordingly; that immediately upon the firſt offence, the tranſgreſſors, and in them the whole ſpecies, were ſunk from their natural immortality, and condemned to a ſtate obnoxious to death.

Whether eating the forbidden fruit was not the natural, as well as judicial cauſe of diſeaſe and death, it is needleſs to diſpute; but what is ſaid of the tree of life in the book of *Geneſis*, and afterwards in the *Apocalypſe*, as if it were a natural antidote, or cure for mortality, and the means of preſerving life, is very remarkable.

Death, the conſequence of the firſt tranſgreſſion, and which has been merited by innumerable ſucceeding offences, was pronounced upon mankind on purpoſe to be to all ages a ſtanding memorial of the Divine diſpleaſure againſt diſobedience. With the ſame view alſo, Scripture informs us, the various natural evils, of the barrenneſs of the earth, inclement ſeaſons, and the other grievances, under which nature at preſent

groans, were inflicted; that men might no where turn their eyes or their thoughts, where they ſhould not meet a caveat againſt vice and irregularity.

Here I cannot help obſerving, by the by, in how ridiculous a light the Scripture account of the fatal and important conſequences of the firſt tranſgreſſion ſhews the uſual ſuperficial apologies made by wretched mortals in excuſe of their vices and follies. One crime is the effect of thoughtleſneſs. They did not, forſooth, conſider how bad ſuch an action was. Another is a natural action. Drunkeneſs is only an immoderate indulgence of a natural appetite; and ſo on. Have ſuch excuſes as theſe been thought ſufficient in the caſe before us? The eating of the forbidden fruit was only indulging a natural appetite directly contrary to the Divine command. And it is very likely, that our firſt parents did not duly attend to all the probable conſequences of their tranſgreſſion. But neither of theſe apologies, nor the inexperience of the offenders, nor their being overcome by temptation, were ſufficient to avert the Divine diſpleaſure, the marks of which, we and our world bear to this hour. Diſobedience to a known law given by our Creator and Governor is always to be looked upon with horror. And no falſe apology ought to be thought of: for we may aſſure ourſelves, none will be admitted before our all-ſeeing Judge, who is not to be deceived.

The next remarkable object of our conſideration, in this general ſurvey of Scripture, is a dark prophecy of a conqueſt to be gained, by one miraculouſly deſcended of our ſpecies, over the grand enemy and firſt ſeducer of mankind; which alſo implies ſome comfortable hopes of a reſtoration of the human race to the Divine favour.

The next diſpenſation of Heaven, which we read of in Scripture, is that moſt awful and remarkable judgement of the univerſal deluge, by which the human race were, for the univerſal corruption of their manners, at once ſwept off the face of the earth, and the world cleanſed from the impurity of its inhabitants. Nothing can be conceived more proper for making a powerful and laſting impreſſion on mankind, or convincing them of the Divine abhorrence of vice and diſobedience, than to be informed, that it occaſioned the cutting off, or unmaking, the whole ſpecies, except eight perſons, whom their ſingular virtue preſerved amidſt the general wreck of nature.

It is remarkable, that after the flood, we find the period of man's life conſiderably reduced below the ſtandard of it in the antediluvian age. This is no more than was to be expected, conſidering what uſe the antients had made of the great length of life they enjoyed. The abridging the term of human life is alſo a ſtanding memorial of the Divine diſpleaſure againſt vice. It naturally

naturally tends, by bringing death nearer the view of even the youngeſt, to leſſen mens attachment to the preſent ſtate, and lead them to think of one better, and more laſting. By this means alſo, the opportunities of offending being leſſened, the guilt and puniſhment of wretched mortals comes to be very conſiderably diminiſhed.

The laws given to *Noah* upon his coming out of the ark, ſeem to be intended for mankind in general, as he was the common father of all who have lived ſince his time. And we know of no general repeal of them. The liberty of killing animals for food is derived wholly from hence; a right which we could not otherwiſe pretend to. Nor can the oppoſers of the Divine authority of Scripture ſhew any pretence for killing a living creature for food, or any ſhadow of title which the human ſpecies have to the life of any creature whatever, but this grant from the Author of life, and Maker of all creatures, who alone has a right to diſpoſe of the lives of his creatures.

The command for putting to death every murderer without exception, which law is no where repealed, ſeems effectually to cut off all power of pardoning that atrocious crime. And many crowned heads have accordingly made it a rule never to extend their mercy to offenders of that ſort.

As to the prohibition of blood, its obligation on us has been diſputed. But, as the blood is

the ſeat of almoſt every diſeaſe, and is a groſs, unwholſome, and nauſeous ſubſtance, conſiſting of earth, ſalt, and phlegm, the beſt way is evidently to abſtain from it, and ſo make ſure of avoiding a breach of a prohibition. And indeed, in all doubutful caſes, prudence will always direct to keep on the ſafe ſide. At the ſame time, the exceſſive ſcrupulouſneſs of the *Jews* about the leaſt particle of blood is abſurd. The prohibition is only againſt eating an animal with the blood in it. And the intention was probably two-fold. One for the advantage of health; the other religious; that, in ſhedding the blood of the animal, a libation or offering might thereby be paid to the Lord of life, and Giver of all gifts.

The account we have in Scripture of the building of the tower of *Babel*, the confuſion of tongues, and ſcattering the people abroad into different countries, is moſt naturally ſolved by ſuppoſing their deſign to have been, to ſet up an univerſal empire, whoſe eſtabliſhed religion ſhould be idolatry and polytheiſm. This being quite contrary to the Divine intention in bleſſing mankind with a revelation from himſelf, it was not fit, that it ſhould be ſuffered to take place, at a time, when there was no nation in the world, in which the worſhip of the true God prevailed. The diſappointment of ſuch a deſign is therefore a Divine diſpenſation fit to be recorded in Scripture.

The

The deſtruction of the cities of the Plain, for their abominable and unnatural vices, is a Divine judgement very fit to be related in the records of the diſpenſations of God to mankind. For ſuch exemplary vengeance on the inhabitants of whole towns, upon kingdoms and empires, and upon the whole world together, as we have authentic accounts of in Scripture, ſhews, that numbers, inſtead of alleviating, do in fact aggravate the guilt of offenders, and draw down a ſwifter and ſurer deſtruction. When we read in Scripture of kingdoms broken in pieces, of cities deſtroyed by fire from Heaven, of nations partly driven from their own country, and ſcattered abroad over the face of the earth, and partly given up to be maſſacred by a bloody enemy; and of the whole inhabitants of the world ſwept at once into a watery grave; all for vices faſhionable in thoſe times, and patroniſed by the great; when we read ſuch accounts of the effects of following faſhion, and imitating great examples, we muſt have very little thought, if we can bring ourſelves to imagine, that there is any ſafety in giving up conſcience to faſhion, or that ſuch an excuſe will at all alleviate our guilt, or puniſhment. While we are in the full purſuit and enjoyment of folly and vice, we rejoice in going along with the multitude, not conſidering, how much we ſhall wiſh hereafter, that we had been ſingular and unfaſhionable, like the illuſtrious heroes of antient times, *Noah*, *Lot*, and *Abraham*,

Abraham, who had the courage to ſtand the empty raillery of their cotemporaries, ſingular in their virtue, and ſingular in the reward of it. Thoſe, who now encourage us in vice and folly, will not hereafter aſſiſt us in ſuffering their appointed conſequences. And the appearance of God, angels, and juſt men, on the ſide of virtue at laſt, will make another ſort of ſhew for keeping its votaries in countenance, than that of the fine folks does now for the ſupport of the oppoſite practice.

The moſt remarkable inſtance that ever was given of the Divine approbation, and diſtinguiſhing favour for ſingular goodneſs, is in the caſe of *Abraham*. This venerable patriarch, according to the Scripture account, was a faithful worſhipper of the true God, while the whole world was ſunk in idolatry and ſuperſtition. He is on that account honoured with the glorious titles of Father of the faithful, and Friend of God; appointed head of the family, from whence the *Meſſiah* was to ſpring; and his poſterity choſen of God for a peculiar people, the keepers of the Divine oracles, and the only witneſſes for the true God, againſt an idolatrous world. He himſelf is called from his own country, and directed by Divine authority to remove to a diſtant land; he is tried and improved by difficulties: for hardſhips are often marks of the Divine favour, rather than the contrary. That the honours ſhewn him in conſequence of his ſingular piety might

might be conſpicuous to the whole world, they do not drop with him; but are continued to his poſterity, who have been, and are likely to be, the moſt remarkable people on earth, and diſtinguiſhed from all others, as long as the world laſts.

It is very remarkable, that there is hardly a great character in Scripture, in which we have not an expreſs account of ſome blemiſh. A very ſtrong preſumption, that the narration is taken from truth; not fancy. Of this illuſtrious pattern of heroic and ſingular virtue, ſome inſtances of ſhameful timidity, and diffidence in the Divine providence, are related. Of *Moſes* ſome marks of peeviſhneſs are by himſelf confeſſed. The character of the Divine pſalmiſt is ſhaded with ſome groſs faults. *Solomon*, the wiſeſt of men, is recorded to have been guilty of the greateſt folly. Several of the prophets are cenſured for their miſbehaviour. The weakneſs and timidity of the apoſtles in general, in forſaking their Maſter in his extremity, are faithfully repreſented by themſelves, and even the aggravated crime of denying him with oaths (to ſay nothing of *Judas's* treachery) not concealed. This is not the ſtrain of a romance. The inventors of a plauſible ſtory would not have purpoſely diſparaged the characters of their heroes in ſuch a manner, to gain no rational end whatever.

One uſeful and noble inſtruction from this remarkable mixture in the characters of the Scripture-

Scripture-worthies, is, That human nature, in its preſent ſtate, is at beſt greatly defective, and liable to fatal errors, which, at the ſame time, if not perſiſted in, but reformed, do not hinder a character from being predominantly good, or diſqualify a perſon from the Divine mercy; which, it is to be hoped, has been the caſe of many in all ages, nations, and religions, though none perfect. Which teaches us the proper courſe we ought to take, when we diſcover in ourſelves any wicked tendency, or have fallen into any groſs error; to wit, Not to give ourſelves up to deſpair; but to reſolve bravery to reform it, and recover our virtue.

We are told in Scripture, that the deſcendents of *Abraham* were, by a peculiar providence, carried into *Egypt*. The deſign of this was, probably, to communicate to that people, the parents of learning in thoſe early times, ſome knowledge of the God of *Abraham*, which might remain after they were gone from thence, and from them might ſpread to the other nations around. The ſignal miracles wrought by *Moſes*; the ten immediate judgments inflicted upon the people of *Egypt*; the deliverance of the *Iſraelites* from their bondage, with a high hand, in open defiance of the *Egyptian* power, under the conduct of a ſhepherd; and the deſtruction of the whole *Egyptian* army, in their endeavour to ſtop their flight; theſe conſpicuous interpoſitions ought to have convinced that people, that the God whom the

Iſraelites

Iſraelites worſhiped was ſuperior to their baffled idol and brute deities. But bigotry, and the force of education, are hardly to be conquered by any means whatever.

We have an account in Scripture of *Moſes's* conducting the *Iſraelites* through the vaſt deſart of *Arabia*, for forty years together, with a continued ſeries of miraculous interpoſitions (their march itſelf one of the greateſt of miracles) in order to their eſtabliſhment in the country appointed them. The deſign of their not being ſooner put in poſſeſſion of the promiſed country, was, as we are informed by *Moſes* himſelf, to break and puniſh their perverſe and rebellious temper; for which reaſon alſo, only two of thoſe, who came out of *Egypt*, reached the promiſed country; all the reſt dying in the wilderneſs. Nor did even *Moſes* himſelf attain the happineſs of enjoying the promiſed land; which he alſo foreſaw he ſhould not, and therefore could have no ſelfiſh views for himſelf, in putting himſelf at the head of this unruly people, to wander all his life, and at laſt periſh in a howling wilderneſs; when he might have lived in eaſe and luxury in the *Egyptian* court. And that he had no ſcheme for aggrandizing his family, is evident from his leaving them in the ſtation of common *Levites*.

The people of *Iſrael*, arriving at the promiſed country, proceed, by Divine command, to extirpate the whole people, who then inhabited it,

and

and to take poſſeſſion of it for themſelves and their poſterity. And there is no doubt, but any other people may, at any time, do the ſame, upon the ſame authority. For, He, who made the earth, may give the kingdoms of it to whom he will. And it is fit, that they who are not worthy to inherit a good land, ſhould be driven out of it. Which was the caſe with the people, who inhabited the land of *Canaan*, upon the arrival of the *Iſraelites* there. For at that time, we are told, the meaſure of their iniquity was full. The *Iſraelites* therefore were authoriſed utterly to deſtroy them, for their enormous wickedneſs; and to take poſſeſſion of their country, not on account of their own goodneſs; but, as expreſsly and frequently declared, in remembrance of *Abraham*, the pious founder of the nation. If the antient Pagan inhabitants of *Canaan* were driven out before the *Iſraelites*, as a proof of God's diſpleaſure againſt their idolatry, and other crimes, nothing could be a more proper warning to the people of *Iſrael*, to avoid falling into the ſame vices, which they ſaw bring utter extirpation upon the natives of the country. Nor could any ſurer proof be given the nations around, of the ſuperiority of the God of the *Iſraelites*, to the idols they worſhiped, than his giving victory to his votaries (a ſeemingly fugitive, unarmed, mixed multitude of men, women and children) over powerful and warlike nations, under regular diſcipline, and in their own country.

Here is again another pregnant inſtance of the different conſequences of virtue, and of vice. Several great and powerful kingdoms overturned for national wickedneſs.

It is evident from the ſtrain of Scripture, that the people of *Iſrael* were ſet up as an example to all nations, of God's goodneſs to the obedient, and ſeverity to diſobedience. It was from the beginning, before their entrance upon the promiſed land, foretold them by *Moſes*, that, if they continued attached to the worſhip of the true God, and obedient to his laws, they ſhould be great and happy above all nations; the peculiar care of heaven, and the repoſitary of the true religion: But if they revolted from their God, and degenerated into idolatry and vice, they were, as a puniſhment, to be driven out of their country, and ſcattered into all nations under heaven. Which puniſhment was alſo to turn to the general advantage of mankind: as the more pious among them would naturally carry the knowledge of the true God into all the countries where they were ſcattered; which happened accordingly.

In order to the ſettlement of this remarkable people in the land appointed them, as a theocracy, or government immediately under God, a body of civil laws is given them directly from heaven by the hand of *Moſes*; a viſible ſupernatural glory, called, the *Shekinah*, abiding conſtantly among them, as an emblem of the Divine preſence,

preſence, and an oracle to have recourſe to in all difficulties. A civil polity eſtabliſhed for them, calculated in the beſt manner poſſible for preventing avarice, ambition, corruption, exorbitant riches, oppreſſion, or ſedition among themſelves, and attacks from the ſurrounding nations upon them, or temptations to draw them into a deſire of conqueſt; in which laſt particulars the *Jewiſh* conſtitution exceeded the *Spartan*, the moſt perfect of all human ſchemes of government, and the beſt calculated to ſecure univerſal happineſs.

In a theocracy, or Divine government, it was to be expected that religion ſhould be the foundation of the civil conſtitution. And had that people been able to bear a purely ſpiritual ſcheme of religion, there is no doubt, but ſuch a one had been given them. As it is, we plainly trace their laws up to their Divine original. In the decalogue, the foundation of their whole legiſlation, we find the very firſt law ſets forth the Divine ſcheme in ſeparating them from the other nations of the world, viz. To keep up, in one country at leaſt, the knowledge and worſhip of the true God, againſt the univerſal idolatry and ſuperſtition, which prevailed in the reſt of the world. The foundation of all their laws, civil and religious, is therefore laid in the firſt commandment; in which they are expreſsly forbid to hold any other deity, but that of the Supreme. As their whole law is ſummed up in the two great precepts

precepts of Loving God, and Loving their fellow-creatures.

'In this compend of the original law given to the *Jews*, it is extremely remarkable, that these two grand precepts are directly obligatory upon the mind. Which proves either, that this body of laws was given by Him who knows the inward motions of the mind, as well as the outward actions, and can punish the irregularities of the one, as well as the other, or that the author of it, supposing it a mere human invention, was a man of no manner of thought or consideration. For what mere human lawgiver, who was in his senses, could think of making a prohibition, which he never could punish, nor so much as know, whether his laws were kept, or violated? But the whole character of *Moses*, the wisdom of the laws he framed for the people of *Israel*, his plan of government, preferable to the best human schemes, and which accordingly continued longer than any of them ever did, without the addition, or repeal of one law; these shew this most antient and venerable legislator to have been above any such gross absurdity, as would have appeared in making laws obligatory on the mind, which is naturally free, and whose motions are cognizable by no judge, but the Searcher of hearts; and all this without any authority above human. And, that intentions, as well as actions, were accordingly commonly punished in

that people, is plain from their hiſtory. But to proceed.

In the ſecond commandment, the worſhip even of the true God, by images or repreſentations, is prohibited, as leading naturally to unworthy ideas of a pure, uncorporeal, infinitely perfect mind; and as ſymbolizing with the idolatry of the nations around. In the third, the due reverence for the name, and conſequently the attributes, and honours, of the Divine majeſty, is ſecured by a moſt awfull threatning againſt thoſe, who ſhould be guiity of any irreverent manner of treating the tremendous name of God. And the fourth ſets apart one day in ſeven, as ſacred to God and religion.

The remaining ſix laws ſecure the obſervance of duty with reſpect to the life, chaſtity, property, and reputation of others; which ſett of laws are very properly founded in due reverence to parents, from whom all relative and ſocial obligations take their riſe. And in the tenth commandment, there is again another inſtance ſuitable to the Divine authority, which enacted thoſe laws; this precept being obligatory on the mind only, and having no regard to any outward action.

The people of *Iſrael*, as obſerved above, were of a temper too groſs and earthly to be capable of a religion, like the Chriſtian, wholly ſpiritual. Thoſe early ages of the world were not ſufficiently improved, to be, in general, fit for any thing above

above mere ſenſe; or however, were more likely to be affected by what was fit to act upon the ſenſes, than what might be addreſſed to the underſtanding. A body of religious ceremonies was therefore incorporated with, and made a part of their polity, or conſtitution. But even in them, the ultimate deſign of ſeparating that people from all others is every where viſible, and almoſt every particular holds it forth. For the religious ceremonies may in general be conſidered as tending to give typical repreſentations of the Chriſtian ſcheme, which was the finiſhing of all the Divine diſpenſations; under which head may be comprehended the various ſacrifices and oblations; and to keep the people continually in mind of their being in a ſtate of guilt before God; for which purpoſe the ceremonial purifications were properly adapted; to prevent their deviating into idolatry, by giving them a religion, which might employ them, and in ſome reſpect ſuit their groſs apprehenſions; accordingly, the ceremonies of the law are in Scripture called imperfect ſtatutes, and carnal ordinances; to prove a yoke and puniſhment for their frequent tendency to idolatry, and image-worſhip; the ceremonial law is therefore called in Scripture an intolerable yoke; and to convey many noble morals under ſenſible ſigns; of which one conſiderable one may be, That by the frequent infliction of death on the victims offered, they might never be ſuffered to forget, that death is the wages of ſin.

We have in Scripture the hiſtory of that moſt extraordinary people partly related, and partly predicted, during a period of above three thouſand years, making a continued ſeries of miraculous interpoſitions (for their preſent ſtate is as much ſo, as any of the paſt) in which the various unexampled viciſſitudes they have undergone, and which they are yet to paſs through, are evidently owing to direct interpoſitions of Divine providence, and are all along the immediate conſequence of their behaviour to their God.

Thus, to mention a few remarkable inſtances, if they murmur againſt *Moſes* in the wilderneſs, and worſhip idols of their own making, their carcaſes fall there, and none of them is allowed to enter the promiſed land, which is given to their children. If they avaritiouſly, and contrary to command, keep the ſpoils of the heatheniſh enemy, they are vanquiſhed in the next engagement. If they be obedient to God, and attack their enemies in full confidence of the Divine ſtrength, they conquer. If one king ſets up the worſhip of idols, the Divine vengeance puniſhes him and his people. If another deſtroys the high places, where thoſe infamous rites were celebrated, all goes well in his time. If a ſucceſſion of inſpired prophets is raiſed among them, to keep them in mind of their allegiance to God, and they put them to death, one after another, for their unacceptable freedom, in reproving the prevailing vices of both king and people; and de-

viate, from time to time, through the infection of the neighbouring countries, into idolatry and vice, they are carried away captive to *Babylon*. If they repent of their fatal degeneracy, and remember their God, whom they have forſaken, he turns their captivity, and brings about their reſtoration to their own land once more. And laſtly, if they fill up the meaſure of their iniquity by imbruing their wicked hands in the blood of their *Meſſiah*, they are totally rooted out of the land, which was given to their fathers; their temple is demoliſhed; their country given to the *Gentiles*, and themſelves ſo ſcattered abroad in all nations, that greater numbers of them may be found almoſt in any country than their own; and to this diſperſion, which has already continued for upwards of ſeventeen hundred years, is added, according to the prediction of *Moſes*, ſuch uncommon diſtreſs, as is not to be equalled in the hiſtory of any other nation.

The early, and total diſperſion of the ten tribes, without any return hitherto (though it is expected, according to antient propheſy, in the laſt ages of the world) ought to have been conſidered by them, as an awful warning of what the remaining part of that people might expect to be their own fate, if they proved diſobedient. And from the hiſtory of the whole twelve tribes, one of the nobleſt and moſt important morals may be drawn, viz. That a nation may expect to proſper, or ſink, according as it is favoured

by Divine providence, or the contrary; and that therefore virtue is the only ſure foundation of national happineſs.

But after all their irregularities, and degeneracies from their God, and his obedience and worſhip, they are all (the poſterity of the ten tribes, as well as the two) according to antient prophecy, to be finally replaced in their own country, in greater happineſs and glory than ever. All which peculiar honours, important diſpenſations, and ſingular interpoſitions for this people, the poſterity of *Abraham*, are intended as a ſtanding proof, during a period of near four thouſand years already, and how much longer God knows, of what value, in the ſight of God, the ſingular piety of that venerable partriarch was, for whom it ſeems as if he could not (ſo to ſpeak) do favours enough even to the lateſt poſterity of him who had greatly ſtood up alone for the worſhip of the true God againſt a whole world ſunk in idolatry.

Prophecy makes a very conſiderable part of revelation. In the predictions of Scripture, there is found ſome account of the future fate of many of the empires and cities, which have made the greateſt figure in the world. From whence we learn, that the author of prophecy is the God of the *Gentiles*, as well as of the *Jews*. That neither his preſcience, nor his power, is limited to the affairs of any one nation whatever.

No

No branch of Scripture-prophecy is ſo intereſting to us, as thoſe which hold forth the coming of the *Meſſiah*, and his kingdom, which ſhine more and more clearly, from the firſt obſcure one given immediately after the fall, "That the "ſeed of the woman ſhould bruiſe the Serpent's "head;" down through a period of four thouſand years, to thoſe plain ones given by *Zacharias* the prieſt, *Simeon*, *Anna*, and *John* the Baptiſt, his immediate fore-runner; and thus the important deſigns of God with regard to mankind, opened by degrees, every great prophecy carrying on the view to the laſt glorious ages; till at length our Saviour himſelf comes as a light into the world, and carries his ſublime informations, and heavenly precepts, immenſely beyond what had been done by all the prophets, lawgivers, and philoſophers, opening a proſpect into eternity, and bringing life and immortality to light. Of prophecy more hereafter.

The hiſtory of our Saviour's birth, life, miracles, doctrine, predictions, death, reſurrection, and aſcenſion, makes a very conſiderable part of Scripture.

The Chriſtian ſcheme itſelf may be conſidered as the publication of an act of grace to a rebellious world, and of the terms upon which God will mercifully receive mankind into favour. The ſublime, the intereſting, and comfortable views it exhibits are theſe.

God, the Original of all being, the Father of mankind, who brought the ſpecies into exiſtence, with a view wholly to their happineſs, willing to forgive his offending guilty creatures upon any terms conſiſtent with the honour of his government; but at the ſame time diſpleaſed with vice and irregularity, and not to be reconciled to offenders, but upon proper conditions. Or in other words, the Chriſtian religion repreſents Almighty God in the twofold character of the wiſe and righteous Governor of the moral world, and of the tender and merciful Father of his creatures.

The Chriſtian ſcheme repreſents the human ſpecies, who were originally, as all orders of rational beings, obliged to a perfect obedience to the Divine authority, and, in conſequence of that, inſured of a happy immorality; univerſally degenerate, and become obnoxious to puniſhment by diſobedience. Which renders ſome expedient neceſſary for ſaving them from deſtruction, conſiſtently with the dignity of the Divine government.

The third character concerned in the Chriſtian ſcheme is the *Meſſiah*, the ſon of God; who is in it exhibited as leaving his celeſtial ſtate, and aſſuming the human nature, to give up voluntarily his life for the ſins of mankind, in order to their being reſtored to a capacity of pardon upon repentance and reformation.

In

In the blameleſs life of this glorious perſon, while on earth, a perfect example is ſet before mankind of obedience to the Divine laws; and in his ſufferings, of patience and reſignation to the will of God.

In his doctrines, the perfections of God are more clearly manifeſted to mankind, than by any, or all the other teachers, that ever appeared. The evil of vice, the excellency of virtue, and their reſpective connexions with happineſs and miſery; more fully ſet forth. The dignity of the human nature more glorioufly manifeſted, in the importance of the ſcheme for the reſtoration of man, and the high elevation to which Chriſtianity teaches to aſpire. The proper and acceptable method of worſhiping God, declared. The certainty of obtaining pardon, upon repentance and reformation. The future reſurrection of the body, and the everlaſting and increaſing happineſs of the whole man, aſcertained beyond doubt.

In his laws, the whole duty of man is more fully and perfectly declared, and with an authority, to which no other lawgiver could pretend; which authority he confirms by unqueſtionable miracles, and predictions fully accompliſhed; by conferring on his followers the power of working miracles; and eſpecially by riſing from the dead, according to his own prediction. The ſubſtance of the preceptive part of Chriſtianity is contained in the following paragraph:

On

On account of the death and interceſſion of the *Meſſiah*, that perfect and blameleſs obedience, which is naturally the indiſpenſable duty of man, and all rational creatures, the defect of which made an expiation and interceſſion neceſſary, is graciouſly diſpenſed with; and inſtead of it, thorough repentance for all our offences, which implies the reformation of them, as far as human frailty will admit, and a candid reception and ſteddy belief of the Chriſtian religion, and ſincere endeavours to obey its laws, and to attain the perfection of its graces and virtues, accepted, and made the condition of pardon and everlaſting happineſs. Which are, love, reverence, gratitude and obedience to God. Love, gratitude, and obedience to *Chriſt*, through whom, as the appointed interceſſor, we are by revelation taught to addreſs the Almighty Father of all, and whoſe death we are to commemorate according to his appointment. Thankfulneſs to the Holy Spirit, the comforter, and inſpirer. Benevolence to men. Temperance with reſpect to our own paſſions and appetites. Humility, meekneſs, chaſtity, purity of heart, integrity in thought and word; mercy, charity, and the performance of all the ſocial and relative duties of life; forgiving of injuries, loving enemies, prudence without cunning; zeal without rancor; ſteddineſs without obſtinacy; contempt of riches, honours, pleaſures, and all worldly things: courage to ſtand up for the truth in ſpite of the applauſe or threatnings

nings of men, attention above all things to the concerns of futurity; vigilance againſt temptations from within, and from the allurements of the world; and perſeverance to the end in aſpiring after the ineſtimable prize of a glorious and happy immortality.

Chriſtianity propoſes the nobleſt motives to obedience, that can be conceived, and the fitteſt for influencing ſuch an order of beings as mankind. The moſt ſordid and ſtupid is likely to be alarmed by the threatnings of a puniſhment inconceivably terrible, and of immenſe duration. The natural conſequence of which fear is, its being deterred from vice, and forced to think of reforming. From whence the next ſtep is into ſobriety, or negative goodneſs. Which leads naturally to the practice of direct virtue; and, as practice produces habit, the iſſue to be expected is, a habit of virtue; an attachment to goodneſs; farther and farther degrees of improvement; and in the end ſuch a perfection in the government of paſſion and appetite, in benevolence to mankind, and piety to God, as will, upon the Chriſtian plan, qualify for future happineſs. Thus, the denunciation of future puniſhment for vice, which Chriſtianity ſets forth, is evidently a wiſe and proper means for promoting virtue. Eſpecially, if we add the encouragement of certainty of pardon, upon repentance and reformation, which important point we owe wholly to revelation. And if we alſo take in the

views of the ſupernatural aſſiſtance which Chriſtianity encourages well-diſpoſed perſons to expect in their conflict with temptation and vice; and thoſe high honours, and that ſublime happineſs, which revealed religion ſets before mankind, as the conſequence of a victorious perſeverance in virtue. The fitneſs of ſuch motives for powerfully influencing ſuch an order of beings, as the human ſpecies, is a proof, that the religion which propoſes them, is of him, who formed the human ſpecies; who endowed mankind with reaſon, with hope, and fear, made the mind ſuſceptible of habit; and ſtamped upon it the idea of immortality. For none, but He, who formed the mind, and perfectly knew its ſprings, could addreſs it in a way ſo proper for influencing it, and for bringing it, in a conſiſtency with its nature, and preſent ſtate, to the ſteddy love and practice of virtue.

We have likewiſe in Scripture an account of the eſtabliſhment of the Chriſtian religion, and the firm adherence of its firſt profeſſors in ſpite of perſecution. Addreſſes from the firſt propagators of Chriſtianity to their proſelytes, explaining more fully the doctrines of religion, ſolving their difficulties, encouraging them to conſtancy, and giving them uſeful directions for the conduct of life. And predictions of the future ſtate of the church, its degeneracy into popery, and the conſummation of all things.

Here

Here the amazing ſcheme, being completed, comes to a period. The Divine diſpenſations with regard to mankind, in their preſent ſtate, having been finiſhed in the eſtabliſhment of the Chriſtian religion in the world, nothing more is to be expected, but the completion of the predictions yet unfulfilled, of which the chief are, the reſtoration of the *Iſraelites* and *Jews* to their own country, with the converſion of the world in general to the Chriſtian religion, which makes way for the laſt glorious ages; for the renovation, and conſummation of all things; for the general judgment of the whole human race according to the characters they have ſuſtained in life, the condemnation, and utter deſtruction of ſuch of the ſpecies, as ſhall be found to have rendered themſelves unworthy, and incapable of the Divine mercy, and the eſtabliſhment of the pious and virtuous in an everlaſting ſtate of glory and happineſs, in order to their improving and riſing higher and higher to all eternity.

Can any man, who only runs through this brief and imperfect ſketch of the whole body of revelation, bring himſelf to believe, that ſuch a ſcheme could have been begun with the beginning of the world, carried on through a ſucceſſion of four thouſand years, by the inſtrumentality of a number of different perſons, who had no opportunity of concerting meaſures together; exhibiting to the view of mankind all that is great, important, and uſeful to be known and

practiſed,

practiſed, all the Divine diſpenſations with reſpect to a ſpecies of rational moral agents, the ſcope and purpoſe of the whole being wiſe, good, worthy of God, and ſuitable to the wants of men, uniform in its purpoſe throughout, teaching one grand, and uſeful leſſon from the beginning to the end, agreeing with itſelf, with the conſtitution and courſe of nature, the ſtrain of hiſtory, and the natural reaſon of man, in which there appears a perfect agreement betwixt types and antitypes, doctrines and precepts, predictions and completions, laws and ſanctions, pretenſions and truth; and the whole leading directly to the higheſt improvement and perfection of human nature; can any man bring himſelf to believe ſuch an univerſal all-comprehenſive ſcheme to be really no more than human contrivance? But of this more hereafter.

SECT. III.

Conſiderations on ſome Particulars in Revealed Religion.

THE reader may remember, that I put off the ſubject of providence, though commonly reckoned a doctrine of natural religion, till I ſhould be upon revelation; becauſe it is from thence that it receives its principal confirmation and eſtabliſhment.

The opinion, that the world, and all things animate and inanimate, are by the infinite Author

of all, ſupported in their exiſtence, and conducted in all the changes of ſtate, which they undergo, is as antient as the belief of the Divine exiſtence. As to the natural or material world, it is certain, from reaſon and experience, that the inactivity of matter is inſeparable from its nature. All the laws of nature, as deduced from experience and obſervation, are founded upon this axiom, That matter does neceſſarily continue in that ſtate in which it is at preſent, whether of reſt, or of direct motion, till it be put out of that ſtate by ſome living agent. To imagine matter capable of itſelf, of changing its ſtate of reſt into that of motion, or of motion into reſt, would be ſuppoſing it ſomething elſe than matter; for it is eſſential to the idea of matter, that it reſiſt all impreſſions made upon it. Unreſiſting matter is a ſelf-contradictory idea, as much as noiſy ſilence, vicious virtue, or the like. There is not one appearance, or effect, in the natural world, that could have been brought about by unreſiſting matter. Upon the *inertia* of matter, the whole courſe of nature depends. To ſay, that matter, however modified, is capable of being made to have any tendency to change its place or ſtate, would be aſcribing to it a power of chooſing and refuſing. For before it can of itſelf change its ſtate of reſt for motion, or of motion for reſt, it muſt chooſe for itſelf. If a particle of matter is to move itſelf, which way ſhall it move? If you determine

determine eaſtward, weſtward, ſouthward, or northward; the queſtion immediately ariſes, why ſhould it move eaſtward rather than weſtward, or ſouthward rather than northward? To aſcribe thought, or choice, or activity of any kind, to matter, however modified, is aſcribing to it what contradicts its very nature and eſſence. For its nature and eſſence is to continue for ever inactive. So that, wherever we ſee a portion of matter in motion, it is certain, that it is moved by the action of ſome living agent. Farther, if we found in the natural world no motions carried on, but what proceeded in direct lines, it might be conceivable, that the matter of the univerſe had received ſuch an impulſe at the beginning, as had continued its motions till now. For, matter, put once in motion, muſt, if left to itſelf, move on in a direct courſe to eternity. But whoever has conſidered the natural world, will reflect, that there are a great many different motions continually going on in the univerſe, ſome of which are directly contrary to others. That the forces, with which bodies tend to one another, and with which ſome ſolid ſubſtances cohere, are immenſely great, while the eaſe, with which the lighteſt bodies paſs through the ſpace, in which thoſe forces prevail, makes it inconceivable, that any thing material is the cauſe of thoſe ſtrong tendencies. This therefore obliges us to have recourſe to ſomething immaterial, as the cauſe of the endleſsly various, complicated, and contrary tendencies,

tendencies, which we ſee prevail in nature. In the ſolar ſyſtem, ſuppoſing, as ſome have fancied, a ſett of ſubtle particles continually flowing inward, toward the ſun, to produce the effect of gravitation, there muſt be another influx of the ſame ſort of particles from all parts toward each of the planets, for they too are endowed (to uſe the common expreſſion) with the power of attracting toward themſelves whatever is within the ſphere of their attraction. It is evident, that the courſe of the particles, which cauſe gravitation toward the ſun, muſt be in part directly contrary to that which cauſes the gravitation of the ſatellites of a planet toward it. And the ſtreams of particles flowing inward, toward each of the ſatellites of a planet, muſt be in part directly contrary to the courſe of thoſe which flow toward the planet itſelf. The planet alſo continually changing place, no poſſible influx of particles toward it can produce the effect required, becauſe that direction of ſuch influx, which would be favourable in one ſituation, muſt of courſe be quite contrary in another. And upon the planet itſelf, if there are any animals or vegetables, any material ſubſtances, in which there is either ſecretion, motion of fluids, corruption, decay, or renovation, the contrariety of the courſe of the particles, by which ſuch internal motions are carried on, muſt be ſuch as to produce abſolute confuſion; for we muſt at laſt conceive, throughout all created ſpace, an infinite number of

ſtreams of ſmall particles flowing in all directions, which could, by the very ſuppoſition, produce no regular motion in the material ſyſtem. Beſides, we know, that the forces of attraction and gravitation are not as the ſurfaces of bodies attracting one another; but as the number of particles contained in them, which requires a power that ſhall freely pervade the moſt ſolid bodies, not merely affect their ſurfaces. We likewiſe know, that elaſtic matter tends every way, or endeavours to diffuſe itſelf wider and wider, and to repel its own particles, and every ſurrounding body. This power, or tendency (to uſe the common improper term) is by no means conſiſtent with any theory of ſtreams of particles flowing any one way; but is eaſily explicable by that of an infinite Mind within all matter.

There is, in ſhort, no ſolution of the various and oppoſite tendencies of the parts of the material ſyſtem, that is not palpably abſurd, beſides having recourſe to an infinite Mind, in which the viſible world has its being, and by which it not only was at firſt put into motion, like a clock wound up and ſet a going; but is continually, from moment to moment, actuated according to certain fixed rules or methods, which are what we call the laws of nature.

If therefore we find it neceſſary, on account of the neceſſary inactivity of matter, which has nothing in its nature equal to the complicated motions, which we ſee in the ſyſtem of the world,

to conclude, that the infinite Author of nature does continually, either mediately or immediately, exert his indefatigable power in conducting and actuating the inanimate machine; we cannot ſuppoſe leſs, than that he beſtows as much of his attention and ſuperintendency upon the moral ſyſtem, as upon the natural; for the latter, having been produced for the ſake of the former, ſhews the former to be of ſuperior value.

The ſuperintendency of a world infinite in extent, and containing an infinite number of particulars, would evidently be no more than what infinite power and omnipreſence would be fully equal to. So that the thought of any ſhadow of difficulty in governing the univerſe, ought never to enter into our minds.

To ſuppoſe great part of the ſcheme of providence carried on by the miniſtration of angels, or other created beings, comes to the ſame, as aſcribing all to the immediate agency of the ſupreme. For every created being in the univerſe, the higheſt ſeraph, as well as the meaneſt reptile, derives all his powers from the Supreme, and depends from moment to moment, upon the univerſal Author of exiſtence, for his being, and the exertion of all his powers.

The promiſcuous diſtribution of happineſs and miſery in this life, or what we commonly call good or bad fortune, is no ſort of objection to the doctrine of a providence. The continual and certain conſequences of virtue and vice reſpectively,

the immediate interpoſition of heaven, on every occaſion, would have been wholly inconſiſtent with a ſtate of diſcipline. And yet there is a general ſcheme as viſibly carried on in the moral world, as in the natural; though many particulars in both lie out of the reach of our weak faculties.

To ſay, that it is diſparaging the Divine wiſdom to alledge the neceſſity or propriety of a continual exertion of power in the natural world, which ought rather to be ſuppoſed to have been ſo conſtituted at firſt as to proceed of itſelf, without the continued application of the Almighty hand; this objection, duly conſidered, has no manner of weight. For, if the material world was to exiſt at all, it was neceſſary it ſhould be what by the very nature of matter it muſt be; that is, inanimate and inactive. And if ſo, it muſt be actuated, or be motionleſs, or at leaſt it muſt have no complex motions. The truth is, a ſelf-moving complicated material machine, is a contradiction in terms; and therefore what could not poſſibly exiſt.

If we conſider that the infinite Mind inhabits all created and uncreated ſpace, we ſhall think it as proper in Him to actuate continually the immenſe machine of the univerſe, to every atom of which he is immediately preſent, as for a human mind to actuate the body it inhabits. And no one in his ſenſes ever thought, it would have been better, that the body ſhould have been made to perform its functions like a clock once wound

wound up, than that it ſhould be continually, from moment to moment, at the command of the mind, to actuate it at pleaſure.

In the ſame manner, with reſpect to the moral world, it is not leſſening the wiſdom or power of the univerſal moral Governor, to ſuppoſe interpoſitions neceſſary. There are various conſiderations, which ſhew the contrary.

In general, that of the preſent frail and pitiable ſtate of human nature; the circumſtance of an evil being's having got an aſcendancy over mankind; of the firſt introduction of vice being through temptation, which may be our peculiar misfortune; of our being perhaps one of the loweſt orders of moral agents; theſe circumſtances may render it proper, that *we at leaſt* ſhould have ſome extraordinary aſſiſtance given us, that there ſhould be ſome peculiar interpoſitions in our favour. Now, to ſuppoſe a poſitive providential oeconomy and ſuperintendency carried on, is ſuppoſing the eaſieſt poſſible ſcheme for gaining ſuch ends as might be wanted for the advantage of our ſpecies.

Communities ſeem to require a providence, to reward, or puniſh their behaviour in their national and public character, as on occaſion of the obſervance, or breach of laws of nations, or alliances. The rewards and puniſhments of the future ſtate will be perſonal. Good men, being guilty of faults, ought to ſuffer in this world, though they come to final happineſs in the next;

that evil may not wholly eſcape; which ſeems to infer the propriety of a providence. The wonderful diſcovery of the perpetrators of horrid crimes, particularly murder, is a ſtrong preſumption of the truth of this doctrine.

But revelation puts this matter wholly out of doubt; as it every where goes upon the ſuppoſition of a continual Divine ſuperintendency over the natural and moral world. For it repreſents this world as God's world, created, preſerved, continually conducted, and hereafter to be judged by Him. It exhibits a ſcheme of the Divine conduct of the affairs of the world in general, and of one nation in particular*, which is altogether inconſiſtent, without taking in the idea of a providence. Prophecy, and miracles, of which elſewhere, neceſſarily ſuppoſe Divine interpoſition. And Holy Scripture in a variety of places expreſsly affirms the doctrine of providence. For it informs us,

"That God preſerveth, and upholdeth all "things by the word of his power; and that "they continue to this day according to his or-"dinance. That he has appointed ſeed-time "and harveſt, cold and heat, ſummer and win-"ter; and that they ſhall not ceaſe, while the "earth remaineth. That with Him is the "fountain of life. That he preſerves man and

* See Page 348. et ſeqq.

"beaſt,

"beaſt, and gives food to all fleſh. That in his
"hand is the ſoul of every living thing, and the
"breath of every creature. That in him we
"live, and move, and have our being, who holds
"our ſouls in life, and will be our guide even
"to death. That he preſerves us, whilſt we
"ſleep, and when we wake; when we go out,
"and when we come in, even from the womb,
"making us to dwell in ſafety. That he is the
"univerſal King, and Judge of all, and does ac-
"cording to his will in the armies of heaven,
"and among the inhabitants of the earth. That
"angels, archangels, principalities and powers,
"thrones and dominions, are ſubject to Him,
"and that they rejoice to do his commandments,
"hearkening to his word. That he gives fruit-
"ful ſeaſons on earth, and crowns the year with
"his goodneſs; and again, at his pleaſure, ſhuts
"up heaven, that there be no rain, and that the
"land yield not her increaſe; turning a fruitful
"land into barenneſs, for the wickedneſs of them
"that dwell therein. That the Moſt high rules
"in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whom-
"ſoever he will. That he puts down one, and
"ſets another up. That by him kings reign,
"and princes bear rule. That unleſs he keep
"the city, the watchmen watch in vain. That
"he increaſes the nations; and again deſtroys
"them; that he enlarges, and ſtraitens them at
"his pleaſure. That whenever he ſpeaks con-
"cerning a nation, to build and to plant, or to

" pluck up and deſtroy it, his counſel ſhall ſtand,
" and he will do all his pleaſure. That from
" him comes every good and perfect gift; and
" at the ſame time, there is no (penal) evil in the
" world, which he has not ſent. That he kills,
" and makes alive; that he wounds, and heals;
" brings down to the grave, and brings up again,
" at pleaſure. That the preparations of the heart,
" and the anſwer of the tongue, are from God,
" who gives wiſdom to the wiſe, and knowledge
" to thoſe who know underſtanding; and when
" it ſeems good to him, hides the things from
" the wiſe and prudent, which he reveals to
" babes. That he makes poor, and makes rich;
" brings low, and lifts up. That riches and
" honour come from him. That the race is not
" to the ſwift, nor the battle to the ſtrong; nor
" bread to the wiſe, nor favour to men of ſkill;
" but it is the hand of God, that has wrought all
" theſe things. That though the horſe be pre-
" pared againſt the day of battle, ſafety is from
" God. That he makes wars to ceaſe, and ſends
" ſword among the nations, at his pleaſure.
" That the wrath of man ſhall be made to work
" out his praiſe, and the remainder ſhall be re-
" ſtrained. That when the lot is caſt, the
" the diſpoſing of it is of God. That he works
" all things according to the counſel of his own
" will, and is accountable to no one."

The truth of the doctrine of providence is therefore eſtabliſhed upon reaſon and revelation.

To

To proceed to another ſubject: The account we have in Scripture of our ſpecies in general ſuffering by the firſt offence of our grand parents, may ſeem at firſt view ſomewhat difficult to underſtand; as if it were a hardſhip that we ſhould be in any reſpect loſers by what we are innocent of. That we ſhould be in danger of being condemned to any future or final puniſhment upon any account, but our own perſonal voluntary guilt, is contrary to the whole tenor of Scripture, and would indeed render revelation, as well as reaſon, wholly uſeleſs for directing us to the means of working out our own ſalvation, and avoiding deſtruction. That perfect juſtice ſhould determine one perſon to final deſtruction for what was done by another, many ages before his birth, at once overturns all our notions of right and wrong. And if we cannot judge of right and wrong, we cannot be expected, nor ſhould ever have been commanded, to forſake the error of our ways, and do that which is lawful and right. So that this opinion groſsly miſrepreſents the character of the Judge of the world, and ſubverts religion, natural and revealed, from the foundation. But that the natural, as well as judicial effect of the firſt violation of Divine authority, followed by innumerable ſucceeding tranſgreſſions, might be the ſinking of the ſpecies ſome degrees lower; the ſubjecting them, and the world they inhabit, to viſible marks of Divine diſpleaſure; and their being, upon the whole

whole, of courſe, in a ſituation leſs promiſing for univerſal virtue and happineſs; may be reaſonable enough to ſuppoſe, and may be found to have been intended for valuable moral purpoſes. For, as the caſe of our ſpecies is, that they have continued diſobedient ever ſince the firſt offence, it is but reaſonable, that they be expoſed to ſufferings and afflictions. And as the natural tendency of affliction is reformation, and every inſtance of our world's being in a ruined ſtate, and under a curſe, ought to furniſh a memorial of the great evil of vice; on theſe conſiderations, the preſent ſtate of the world is evidently an effect of the Divine goodneſs, as well as ſeverity. If man is ſunk below the ſtation, in which the ſpecies were firſt placed, he has no room for complaint: for he might have been placed there at his creation. If our condition ſeems leſs promiſing for virtue and happineſs, than that in which the firſt of the ſpecies were at their creation placed; it is on the other hand to be remembered, that revelation ſhews, very great things have been done for us, more than ſufficient to make up for what ſeeming diſadvantages we may labour under. And thus all ground of complaint is effectually precluded.

The Scripture account of the deſtruction of mankind by a general deluge, is a ſubject which deſerves to be briefly conſidered.

Though it is not to be poſitively affirmed, that this, or the other, was the true cauſe of a particular

particular ſupernatural phænomenon, or the method in which it was brought about; we may yet conclude in general, that it is more ſuitable to the ways of God, to bring about all effects, as well natural, as thoſe we call ſupernatural, or miraculous, by certain adequate means, and, as far as poſſible, conſiſtently with the ſtated laws and courſe of nature. That a mighty wind ſhould, according to the Scripture account, ſeparate the *Red-ſea* for the paſſage of the people of *Iſrael*, was as proper a miracle wrought in their favour, as if the immediate word or will of God had done it. And if the general deluge was brought on by ſome pre-eſtabliſhed natural means, it was no leſs a Divine judgment upon a race of creatures, whoſe wickedneſs was foreſeen, than if it had been cauſed by the immediate exertion of Omnipotence. What conſtitutes a particular wonderful event a proper miracle, in a theological ſenſe, is, its being expreſsly appealed to by ſome perſon, as a confirmation of a new pretended doctrine or miſſion from heaven. The general deluge was accordingly foretold, and the people of thoſe antient times forwarned of it by *Noah*, but in vain. Should a perſon, pretending to a Divine miſſion, foretel an earthquake ſome months or years before, and an earthquake ſhould happen exactly at the threatened time, all reaſonable men would yield that meaſure of aſſent to his aſſertions and pretentions, which might be thought juſtly due to the authority of one

one ſingle miracle, taken in conjunction with the other circumſtances of his own character, and that of his doctrine. Yet earthquakes are effects of natural cauſes. And if any perſon thinks it diſparages the miracle of the flood to ſay, that it was brought about by the inſtrumentality of an intervening cauſe, the objection is the ſame, taking it for an immediate effect of Divine power. For the end being the deſtruction of a race of degenerate mortals, it may as well be ſaid, Why were they not all ſtruck dead in a moment by a word from the mouth of God, without the inſtrumentality of the ſuffocating element of water? as, Why was the flood brought on by means of any intervening cauſe? No one doubts, whether the old world was deſtroyed by God, as an exemplary puniſhment for their wickedneſs. Why ſhould any one think it leſs a Divine judgment, for its being brought about in a conſiſtency with the regular and uniform pocedure of nature, than if it had been an effect quite detached from, and unconnected with the univerſal ſcheme; which is not ſo beautiful, ſo maſterly, nor ſo worthy of an univerſal Governor.

Since the deciſion of the queſtion of the cauſe of the tides, which puzzled all antiquity, and has been ſhewn by our incomparable philoſopher to be the effect of the mutual gravitation of the earth and moon; it is very eaſily conceivable, that a nearer approach of the moon toward our

earth, by a third part of her whole diſtance, would cauſe an enormouſly high tide. If therefore we ſuppoſe the moon, or any other celeſtial body, to approach very near to the earth, the effect muſt be ſuch a tide, as would riſe higher than the higheſt lands, and, rolling round the globe, would waſh down all terreſtrial creatures into the deep, where they muſt periſh. As we know that comets, from time to time, come from all parts of the heavens, and enter into the planetary regions; it is no unnatural ſuppoſition, to imagine that a comet, paſſing near the earth at the time of the deluge, might have been the appointed inſtrument of the Divine vengeance, by producing, by means of attraction, a diſruption of the outward ſhell of this earth, under which it is probable a great collection of waters was lodged; which being by attraction raiſed into an exceſſive tide, muſt occaſion the immerſion and deſtruction of all land animals. And which might in great part be afterwards abſorbed into vaſt empty caverns in the earth, which might by the ſame means be opened for its reception, and thus the preſent dry land left. The Scripture account, of the "breaking up of the fountains of "the great deep," ſeems to countenance this notion; which whoever would examine thoroughly, may read *Whiſton's* Theory of the Earth. That it is made very probable in that work, that a comet did paſs near the annual path of the earth about the time of the general deluge, is acknowledged

knowledged by the moſt judicious aſtronomers. That, upon every theory, the account of the flood is attended with difficulties, muſt likewiſe be confeſſed. But I think it a ſatisfaction, that upon the ſuppoſition of its being brought about by a comet, the poſſibility of it is fairly made out, and even a ſort of analogy to the common courſe of nature, in the tides, which at times riſe to ſuch heighths as to produce partial deluges.

However the flood was brought about, there are too many viſible and unqueſtionable marks of a general diſruption of the outſide of this our planet, in the hideous mountains, miſhapen rocks, hollow vales, and other ruinous appearances, with quantities of ſea-ſhells, bones of animals, and large trees, found at a great depth in the earth; there are, I ſay, too many marks of a general concuſſion and ruin over the whole face of the earth, to leave any room to doubt that it has undergone ſome very great and univerſal change; which we have all the reaſon in the world to conclude, was no other than that of the general deluge, which, as it is deſcribed in Scripture, ſeems fit to have produced exactly the effects we obſerve.

It is true, that teleſcopes diſcover, on the face of the moon, and the planet *Venus*, irregularities and roughneſſes, which make an appearance ſomewhat like to thoſe, which we may ſuppoſe might be obſerved from the moon upon the face of our earth. But we cannot be certain, that

that thoſe inequalities have not been part of the original make of thoſe bodies; unleſs we could examine them, as we can thoſe of our own planet. So that what we obſerve of this ſort upon thoſe bodies does in no degree affect what has been ſaid with reſpect to the probability that a general deluge was the cauſe of the viſibly ruinous ſtate of our earth; for we cannot be ſure, that the inequalities on the face of the Moon and *Venus* are of the ſame ruinous kind with thoſe of our world. The Moon eſpecially differs from our planet in two eſſential particulars. For it is certain beyond all doubt, that ſhe has neither ſea, at leaſt on the face which is always towards us, nor atmoſphere of air. So that we cannot reaſon on any minute circumſtances from one to the other; but may judge of what we find in our own world, the ſtate of which ſeems perfectly to anſwer to what might have been expected to be produced by ſuch a deluge as *Moſes* deſcribes.

One particular, with regard to the flood, is too remarkable to be omitted. We have in the book of *Geneſis* an exact account of the meaſures of the ark in cubits. In the time of *Moſes*, it is not to be ſuppoſed, that the world was ſo well known, or natural hiſtory carried ſuch a length, that the variety of different ſpecies of terreſtrial animals ſhould be gueſſed at to any nearneſs. So that it was to be expected, the meaſures of the ark ſhould be taken either too ſmall or too large, if the calculation of the room neceſſary for lodging

ing ſeven of every clean ſpecies, and two of every one of the others, had been taken according to mere human knowledge, or conjecture. Inſtead of which, it is found by calculations made in our times, when it is, by means of our extenſive commerce over the world, known, how many different ſpecies of terreſtrial animals there are in all different climes and countries; that the meaſures we have of the ark would have afforded juſt ſufficient room for all the creatures to be ſtowed in it, and one year's proviſion. No human ſagacity could, in thoſe early times, in which there was ſo little intercourſe among the inhabitants of different countries, have gueſſed at the true number of different ſpecies of land animals in all the various climates of the world, every one of which almoſt has its peculiar ſett. It is therefore evident, that the ſize and capacity of the ark was orderd by Divine appointment. For a human architect would undoubtedly have given its meaſures too large or too ſmall.

There being ſomewhat ſeemingly difficult in the Scripture account of thoſe degenerate beings, the fallen angels, it may be proper to throw together a few thoughts on that head.

Whether the angelic ſpecies were, at the time of their fall, in a firſt ſtage of trial, ſuch as that in which we are at preſent, or whether they had gone through their firſt ſtate of diſcipline, and deviated afterwards, as it ſeems inconſiſtent with the nature of finite moral agents to ſuppoſe them

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in any ſtate out of all danger, or poſſibility of deviation; whatever particular ſtate, I ſay, they were at that time in, the poſſibility of their degenerating into diſobedience may be accounted for in a way comprehenſible by us; though we cannot be ſure, that we have the true and full account of that whole matter. The moſt probable account of the tranſgreſſion and degeneracy of thoſe once illuſtrious beings, may be, That they diſallowed of the juſt pretentions of the *Meſſiah* to be the general Governor of their whole order; as the perverſe *Jews* afterwards rejected him, when he came in the fleſh. To ſuppoſe that the angels, now fallen, were capable of reſolutely and deliberately oppoſing themſelves to Omnipotence, or raiſing rebellion againſt God, *as God*, is abſurd. But it is no way inconceivable, that they might at firſt queſtion the *Meſſiah's* pretenſions to authority over them, which might, for any thing we know, be diſputable, as his miſſion appeared to ſome even of the ſincere, though not ſufficiently conſiderate, *Jews*. In conſequence of this, we can eaſily enough conceive the poſſibility of their being miſled, by pride, by example, and perſuaſion of *Satan*, the leader of the adverſe party, who probably himſelf had aſpired to a ſuperiority over his fellow-beings, and could not brook a rival. As to the difficulty of ſuppoſing a ſett of beings, of ſuch ſuperior wiſdom as we commonly ſuppoſe they poſſeſſed, capable of error; Scripture itſelf expreſsly affirms, that the

angels are chargeable with folly. Beſides, we pronounce raſhly, when we pretend to aſſert, that the angels were at the time of their fall greatly ſuperior to the moſt knowing of our ſpecies. We find indeed thoſe who kept their integrity, ſpoke of in Scripture as raiſed to very high degrees of elevation. But nothing can from thence be argued with reſpect to thoſe who fell many ages before, when perhaps they might not be riſen to any ſuch degree of perfection as the good part of that ſpecies now enjoy, which may be the reward of their virtue and fidelity. Beſides, ſuppoſing thoſe beings to have fallen from a ſtate of happineſs, to which they were raiſed in conſequence of their having with ſucceſs paſt through one ſtage of trial or diſcipline, we know not whether one ſtage of diſcipline was all that was allotted them. We know not but they were to paſs through two, or more, as one properly ſpeaking ſeems appointed for us, though, as obſerved before, no ſtate of freedom can be wholly ſecure from all poſſibility of deviation, but only more and more ſo, according to the increaſing experience, longer habitude, and greater wiſdom of moral agents. We know not, but the angelic ſpecies were raiſed to the happineſs, from which they fell, in conſequence of their going through a more advantageous and eaſy firſt ſtage of probation, than what is appointed us; and that, to balance that advantage, the happineſs they were raiſed to was more precari-

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ous than that which is deſtined for thoſe of our ſpecies, who ſhall acquit themſelves with honour of a more difficult one. This ſeems no more than equitable, and natural, that the conſequence of an eaſier ſtate of trial paſſed through with ſucceſs ſhould be a lower degree, and more precarious kind, of happineſs; and of a more difficult one, a higher and more certain kind of happineſs. And beſides, it is very probably the nature of all moral agents to value moſt, and be moſt afraid of loſing, what has coſt them the greateſt pains to attain, and what only a few have attained. However it be, there is plainly no abſurdity in the Scripture account of the fall of a certain number of beings, of a rank prior in exiſtence, and ſuperior in dignity, to ours; nor of their being driven, by a total deſpair of recovery to the Divine favour, to a confirmed habit of perſeverance in vice, and oppoſition to all good; which, increaſing, muſt increaſe their puniſhment, and multiply their damnation. That thoſe deſperate beings, who know themſelves to be ſealed to deſtruction, ſhould, as far as permitted, exerciſe an implacable envy and hatred againſt our ſpecies, of whom they forſee that ſome part will riſe to that happineſs, from which they are irrecoverably fallen, is not to be wondered at. A *Nero*, a Duke *d'Alva*, a bloody father inquiſitor*; are not theſe dæmons? If we

* See Page 65.

have ſuch diabolical beings in our own ſpecies, who have had ſo ſhort a time to improve in wickedneſs, and are ſtill under a diſpenſation of heavenly grace; why ſhould we wonder at any accounts we have in Scripture of the confirmed wickedneſs of ſpirits abandoned to deſpair, and who have had many thouſands of years to improve and harden themſelves in vice.

Some have made a difficulty of the incarnation of *Chriſt*; as if there were in that doctrine ſomewhat peculiarly hard to admit, or next to abſurd. But in ſuch caſes, where nothing is required to be granted, but what is analogous to the courſe of nature; it does not ſeem reaſonable to heſitate at any ſuppoſed difficulty, which, if removed, would leave another confeſſedly as hard to ſurmount. How a ſpiritual being, of any rank whatever, comes to be immured in a material vehicle, is to us wholly inconceivable. The incarnation of a human ſoul is a myſtery utterly inexplicable by human ſagacity. Nor is it at all more incomprehenſible, how an angel, or archangel, ſhould animate a body, than how a human mind ſhould. The difficulty does not ariſe from the rank, or dignity, of the ſpritual being; but from the nature of ſpirits in general; whoſe power of animating and actuating a material vehicle, and the *nexus*, which forms the union between two natures ſo different, are to us wholly inconceivable.

And as to the objection, Of its being improbable, that a being of ſuch dignity, as that of the *Meſſiah*, ſhould condeſcend to aſſume, for a time, the loweſt ſtation of rational nature; it will preſently vaniſh, on conſidering the importance of the purpoſe, for which he did ſo. For if, in conſequence of this amazing condeſcenſion, there ſhould, in a conſiſtence with the Divine rectitude, and eſtabliſhed order of the moral world, and the freedom of the creature, many thouſands, perhaps millions, of our ſpecies, be raiſed hereafter by degrees to ſuch greatneſs and goodneſs, that the preſent ſtation of the archangel *Gabriel* will be regarded by them as an inferior one (which will certainly one day be the caſe) who can think any apparatus, to gain ſuch an end, too coſtly, or operoſe? Whoever duly conſiders the ſtupendous excellence of a nature, which, however mean and low at preſent, is yet formed capable of an endleſs progreſſion in every noble quality; will not think any contrivance ill beſtowed, or any condeſcenſion too low, to gain the moral improvement of ſuch a ſpecies. Add, that condeſcenſion on a proper occaſion, and for ſome important end, is ſuitable to a ſuperior nature; and peculiarly agreeable to every great mind. And let the conſideration of the high exaltations of the *Meſſiah*, in conſequence of his gracious interpoſition for the recovery of a ruined ſpecies, be taken in. Add likewiſe the divine pleaſure of exerting a benevolence ſo extenſive, that an eter-

nity will be employed by a race of beings, delivered by it from utter deſtruction, in celebrating its praiſes, and expreſſing that gratitude, which every ſucceeding period of their happy exiſtence will heighten, every new enjoyment will inflame with ever-growing raptures.

To pretend to diſpute whether it was poſſible for mankind to be reſtored by any other means, than thoſe which infinite Wiſdom has choſen, is both preſumptuous, and uſeleſs. It is our wiſdom to conſider what we have to do, as the moral conſtitution of things is; not to amuſe ourſelves with vain ſpeculations upon what could do us no ſervice to know, and what it is impoſſible we ſhould by our own ſagacity ever diſcover. In general, it is evident, that the repentance and reformation of offenders was not of itſelf, without ſome additional apparatus, ſufficient, conſiſtently with the Divine ſcheme, to reſtore a guilty order of beings to a capacity of being received to pardon. For divine wiſdom never uſes a more operoſe method of proceeding, when one leſs ſo will anſwer the end.

Whether we ſhall at all, in the preſent ſtate, be able to determine wherein the principal propriety, or neceſſity of the death of *Chriſt* conſiſted, and how it came to be efficacious for our reſtoration to the Divine favour, is greatly to be queſtioned; as Scripture has only declared to us the fact, that it is chiefly by his laying down his life for mankind, which was the great end of his coming

coming into the world, that we are to be received to pardon and mercy; but has given us no preciſe account of the *modus* of the operation of his death for that purpoſe, nor how the ends of the Divine government were anſwered by it. In general, may it be ſaid, That the conſideration of ſo important a ſcheme found neceſſary for reſtoring an offending order of beings, is likely to ſtrike all rational minds, who may ever come to the knowledge of it, with a very awful ſenſe of the fatal evil of vice, which made it neceſſary. And as they muſt ſee the difficulty of finding ſuch a mediator for themſelves, in caſe of their offending; they may thereby be the more effectually deterred from diſobedience. It may impreſs them with high notions of the Divine purity, and averſion to evil, which made the reſtoration of offenders a work ſo difficult and expenſive. And we know not how wide each particular in the moral ſcheme of the Divine government may extend. We are told in Scripture, that the angels deſire to look into the myſtery of our ſalvation. That ſome of them have actually fallen from their obedience is doubted by none who admit revelation. That there is any ſtate of finite virtue and happineſs ſo ſecure, as that it is impoſſible to fall from it, or that created beings can, conſiſtently with freedom, be raiſed to any ſuch ſtate, as to defy weakneſs and error, and to be above all advantage from inſtruction by precept or example, is by no means to be af-

firmed. And if there be no reaſon to doubt, but in all ſtates, free agents are fallible (though more and more ſecure of continuing in their obedience, as more perfect) ſince according to Scripture even the angels are chargeable with folly; it may then be put as a conjecture, whether the ſcheme of the reſtoration of mankind may not have immenſely extenſive and valuable effects upon various orders of moral agents throughout the univerſe for preſerving them in their obedience. This effect the conſideration of it ought to have eſpecially above all on us, who are moſt nearly intereſted in it; and we ought not to hope to eſcape, if we neglect ſo great ſalvation; and ought therefore, if we name the name of *Chriſt*, to reſolve to depart from iniquity. It is alſo to be expected, that the conſideration of what our everlaſting happineſs coſt, ſhould immenſely enhance the value of it to thoſe of our ſpecies who ſhall hereafter be found fit for it; eſpecially with the additional conſideration of the hideous ruin we ſhall have eſcaped, which is ſuch, as to render it neceſſary for the Son of God to leave, for a ſeaſon, his eternal glory, to deſcend to our lower world, and give himſelf to death, to deliver as many of us as would, from it. That our Saviour died a witneſs to the truth of his own miſſion and doctrine, as well as a ſacrifice for the ſins of mankind, is certain. But it is evident, that his death was very different, both in intention and conſequences, from thoſe of the martyrs. That his death

was alſo a glorious inſtance of obedience, and a noble example for our imitation, and that of all rational agents, is alſo to be taken in, and heightens the grandeur of the ſcheme. A conſequence from the obedience and death of *Chriſt*, mentioned in Scripture, and hinted above, is his being "highly exalted, and receiving a name "above every name in heaven and earth, to the "glory of God the Father." Of which likewiſe we can ſee the propriety and juſtice. And Scripture alſo countenances the opinion, That the high exaltation of ſuch a number of mankind, as ſhall be found capable of it, is given him as a reward for his ſufferings.

However none of theſe conſiderations, nor all of them together, come up to the point in queſtion, viz. What connexion in the nature of things there is between the death of *Chriſt* and the ſalvation of mankind. This will probably be a *deſideratum* as long as the preſent ſtate laſts.

To expect, that we ſhould be informed of the Divine oeconomy with the ſame diſtinctneſs as of our own duty, would be a piece of arrogance above ordinary. It is by experience we are inſtructed in temporals, as well as ſpirituals; and we proceed according to it, and are ſucceſsful in the affairs of life, while we know little or nothing of the means by which the Divine wiſdom acts in the natural world, and ought in all reaſon to expect to know ſtill leſs of his ſcheme in a ſupernatural interpoſition, as the plan of our redemption

redemption may be called. Did we know, which probably it is not proper we ſhould, more of the foundations and connections of the various parts of that ſublime ſcheme, we ſhould then know nothing uſeful to us, but our duty. That we know now; and with ſuch clearneſs, as will render us wholly inexcuſable, if we be not found in the full and faithful performance of it.

The doctrine of the future reſurrection of the body may, as properly as any one, be ſaid to be peculiar to revelation. For there is no reaſon to think, that even the more civilized heathen nations had generally any notion of it. On the contrary, we find the enlightned *Athenians*, in the apoſtolic times, ſtartled at it, as altogether new to them. But, to uſe the words of the great apoſtle of the *Gentiles* to his hearers, "Why "ſhould it be thought a thing incredible, that "God ſhould raiſe the dead?" To give life and being at firſt to what was once nothing, is certainly at leaſt as difficult, as to reſtore a bodily vehicle from a ſtate of corruption, and to re-unite to it the mind, which had ſtill preſerved its exiſtence during the ſtate of ſeparation. And the ſame omnipotence, which was equal to the former, may be fairly concluded equal to the latter. The preciſe *modus*, in which this re-union of the material and ſpiritual parts of the human nature at the reſurrection, will be executed, is to us, as well as innumerable other effects of the Divine power, wholly unknown. The following hypo-

theſis,

theſis, or conjecture, (the author of which I cannot recollect) has been thought ingenious. That there may be originally diſpoſed, in the ſtructure of the human frame, a ſyſtem of *ſtamina*, in miniature, of the future aerial or ætherial reſurrection-body, ſo enveloped, or wrapt up, as to continue incorruptible, till the conſummation of all things; at which time, by a pre-eſtabliſhed law of nature, it may unfold itſelf, in a manner analogous to conception, or vegetation, and the ſoul being re-united to it, the perfect man may again appear, renewed in his nature and ſtate, and yet in general the ſame compound being he is at preſent, conſiſting of ſoul and body, or, perhaps more properly, of body, ſoul, and ſpirit. The apoſtle *Paul's* compariſon of the death and burial of the body, to the ſowing of a grain of wheat; and the reſurrection of the future body, to the ſpringing up of the ſtalk, which we know to be nothing elſe, than the unfolding of the minute *ſtamina* originally diſpoſed in the grain ſown; gives countenance to this conjecture, and probably furniſhed the firſt hint of it. It is not my purpoſe to eſtabliſh any one hypotheſis whatever. The only end anſwered by mentioning a conjecture for ſolving this difficulty, if it be a difficulty, is to ſhew the doctrine of a future reſurrection to be conceivable, without any abſurdity. It muſt even be owned, that the ſcheme of a reſtoration, or renovation, of the whole human nature is incomparably more beautiful and regular, and conſequently

quently more likely to be the true one, than that received by the heathen world, which ſuppoſed the total loſs or deſtruction of one eſſential part of the nature, I mean the body; and made the future man a quite different being, an unbodied ſpirit, inſtead of an embodied one. Whereas the Chriſtian ſcheme repreſents the diſſolution and ſeparation of the body for a time as the effect and puniſhment of vice; and its reſtoration as the effect of the kind interpoſition of our glorious Deliverer; by which means the whole exiſtence of the human ſpecies (I mean, of that part of them, which ſhall be found fit for life and immortality) appears uniform and of a piece; and after the concluſion of the ſeparate ſtate, goes on as before, only with the advantage of being incomparably more perfect, though ſtill the ſame in kind.

The views held forth in Scripture of the future reſtoration, glory and happineſs, of the peculiar people of God; of the univerſal eſtabliſhment of the moſt pure and perfect of religions; of the *millennium*, or paradiſe reſtored, with the general prevalency of virtue and goodneſs; by which means a very great proportion of thoſe, who ſhall live in that period, will come to happineſs; all theſe views are ſublime, worthy of the Divine revelation, which exhibits them, and ſuitable to the greatneſs of the moral oeconomy. But, as the future parts of prophecy are, and ought

ought to be, difficult to underſtand in all their minute particulars, as is evident from the diverſity of opinions given by the commentators on thoſe parts of holy writ; while they generally agree, that the above-mentioned particulars are in Scripture held forth as to be hereafter accompliſhed; as this, I ſay, is the caſe, it may not be neceſſary, that I attempt to fix any one particular ſcheme of the completion of thoſe parts of prophecy.

The doctrine of a future general judgment of the whole human race, by the ſame Divine perſon, who, by the power of the Father, made the world, and who redeemed it; is held forth in Scripture in a manner ſuitable to the pomp, with which ſo awful a ſcene may be expected to be tranſacted. That the whole Divine oeconomy, with reſpect to this world, ſhould conclude with a general enquiry into, and public declaration of, the character, and ſo much of the paſt conduct, as may be neceſſary, of every individual of the ſpecies; and that, in conſequence of the different behaviour of each, during the ſtate of diſcipline and probation, their future exiſtence ſhould be happy, or miſerable; that every individual ſhould be diſpoſed of according to what he has made himſelf fit for; all this the perfect rectitude of the Divine nature indiſpenſably requires. And without this concluſion of the whole oeconomy, the moral government of the world muſt be imperfect; or rather, without it, the very idea of moral

moral government is abſurd. That the deciſion of the future ſtate of men will turn chiefly upon their general prevailing characters; the habits they have acquired; the diſpoſitions they have cultivated; their attachment to virtue and obedience, or to irregularity and vice; ſeems probable both from Scripture and reaſon. So that, as, on one hand, a few errors, if not perſiſted in, but repented of, and reformed, being conſiſtent with a prevailing good character, may be overlooked; ſo, on the other, a thouſand acts of charity, or virtue of any kind, if done from indirect views, or by perſons of hypocritical or bad hearts, will gain no favour from the general Judge. Of what conſequence is it then, that we be ſure of our own integrity! And how dreadful may the effects prove of going out of the preſent ſtate of diſcipline, with one vicious habit uncorrected, or with a temper of mind defective in reſpect of one virtue!

Whether all the more ſecret errors of perſons of good characters, of which they have ſincerely repented, which they have for years lamented with floods of undiſſembled tears, and which they have thoroughly reformed; will be diſplayed to the full view of men and angels; ſeems a queſtionable point. For, it does not to reaſon appear abſolutely neceſſary. It being eaſily enough conceivable, that the character of a perſon may be determinable by Divine Wiſdom, and capable of being ſet forth to the general view in a manner

a manner ſufficiently ſatisfactory, without ſo minute an examination. And, if ſo, it may be concluded, that the ſincere penitent will be put to no needleſs pain. And if there is a pain more cruel than another, it is, for a generous mind to be expoſed to public ſhame. Beſides what reaſon may ſuggeſt on this head, the numerous expreſſions of Scripture, of "blotting out the ſins of "penitents from the books of remembrance, of "hiding, covering, and forgetting them," and the like, ſeem to favour the opinion, that the character and conduct of penitents will be only ſo far diſplayed, as to ſhew them to be fit objects of the Divine mercy.

SECT. IV.

Conſiderations on the Credibility of Scripture.

IT is not only to the ſtudious and learned, that the proofs of revelation lie level. All men, who will apply their faculties with the ſame diligence and attention which they every day beſtow upon the common affairs, and even the amuſements, of life, may be rationally convinced, that they are under Divine government, and muſt feel, that they are accountable creatures; upon which fundamental principles the whole ſcheme of revelation being conſtructed, they may eaſily bring themſelves to ſee the force of the evidence ariſing from miracles and the completion of prophecy, particularly thoſe relating to the *Jewiſh* people;

people; which, in conjunction with the character of *Moſes* and the Prophets, of *Chriſt*, and his Apoſtles; a due attention to the nature and tendency of the doctrines and precepts contained in Scripture; and the conſideration of the eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity, ſo wholly unaccountable upon any other foot, than its being from God; may give give full and well-grounded ſatisfaction to any conſiderate perſon, that all the objections of the oppoſers of revealed religion can never amount to ſuch a degree of weight in the whole, as to over-balance the poſitive proof for it, or yield a ſufficient proof that the whole is a forgery.

At the ſame time it muſt be obſerved, that to be qualified for examining in a proper manner all the various arguments in favour of revelation, requires a very extenſive knowledge in various ways, as in philological and critical learning, hiſtory, and philoſophy, natural and moral. Which ſhews in a very ſtrange light the preſumption of many men of ſuperficial and narrow improvements, who pretend to oppoſe religion, and raſhly enter into a diſpute for which they are ſo ill furniſhed.

For it is the unfair and fallacious proceeding of many diſingenuous oppoſers of revealed religion, to detach ſome ſingle branch of proof, or ſome doubtful argument, and by cavilling at that, endeavour to overturn the whole evidence for revelation. But whoever will conſider the ſubject with

with candor, will ſee, that it is of ſuch an extenſive nature, comprehends ſo many different views, and is eſtabliſhed upon ſuch a variety of arguments, drawn from different parts of knowledge, that the true ſtate, and full reſult, of the evidence, upon the whole, cannot, by the nature of the thing, be reduced to one point; and conſequently, that taking any one narrow view of it, and judging from that, is the way to deceive ourſelves and others. It is indeed as if a man were raſhly to pronounce, that the earth is of no regular figure whatever, merely from obſerving the irregularity of the *Alps*, and other ranges of mountains, which fill the eye of the traveller, while the whole globe is too large, and too near, for the human ſight to comprehend its general figure. Yet the very firſt principles of geography ſhew, that the protuberance of the higheſt mountain of the world, being but three miles perpendicular, is no greater irregularity upon a globe eight thouſand miles in diameter, than the little roughneſſes upon an orange are derogations from the general roundneſs of its figure; as a mite, or other very ſmall inſect, might be ſuppoſed to imagine them.

To conſider any complex ſubject in a partial manner, excluſive of any material part, and without taking in the whole of it, is not conſidering it as it is; and ſubjects will not be underſtood otherwiſe than as they are. Men of narrow minds may run themſelves, and deſigning

men others, into endleſs labyrinths, and inextricable errors: but truth ſtands upon its own eternal and immoveable baſis; and wiſdom will in the end be juſtified of her children.

The whole evidence of revelation is not prophecy alone, nor miracles alone, nor the ſublimity of its doctrines alone, nor the purity of its precepts alone, nor the characters of *Moſes* and the prophets, *Chriſt*, and his apoſtles alone, nor the internal character of ſimplicity in the writings of Scripture alone; nor any one of the other branches of proof alone; but the joint coincidence and accumulated effect of them all concentred. Now he who can bring himſelf to belief ſeriouſly, that ſuch a number of amazing coincidences, ſuch a variety of evidence, preſumptive and poſitive, circumſtantial and eſſential, collateral and direct, internal and external, ſhould by the Divine providence be ſuffered to concur, to the effectual and remedileſs deception of the moſt inquiſitive, judicious, and ingenuous part of mankind, muſt have ſtrange notions of the Divine oeconomy in the moral world. And he, who, in ſpite of the ſuper-abundant and accumulated evidence for the truth of revelation, will ſuffer himſelf to be miſled into oppoſition againſt it, merely on the account of ſome ſingle circumſtantial difficulty, muſt have no head for judging of complicated evidence; which yet every man has occaſion to weigh, and to act upon almoſt every day of his life. And he, who, from indirect views of any kind, labours to miſlead

miſlead mankind into oppoſition againſt what would be infinitely to their advantage to receive, is the common enemy of truth, and of mankind.

If the ſacred hiſtory of Scripture has not the internal marks of truth, there is no reaſon to give credit to any hiſtory in the world. And to queſtion the veracity of antient hiſtory in the groſs, would be (to mention no other abſurd conſequences) doubting whether there were any men of integrity in the world, till theſe four or five centuries laſt paſt. The remarkable co-incidence betwixt ſacred and profane hiſtory ſhews the genuineneſs of the former; and its delivering grave and credible accounts of things, while many of the antient writers amuſe us with fables evidently drawn from imperfect accounts of the ſacred ſtory, plainly diſcover Scripture to have been the original from which the other is an imperfect copy. Of the foundation and meaſure of certainty attainable by teſtimony, I have treated elſewhere *.

The fragments of antient *Phœnician* hiſtorians preſerved by *Euſebius*; with what we have of *Zeno*, the *Egyptian* writers, whoſe opinions and accounts of things are preſerved by *Diogenes Laertius*, *Diodorus Siculus*, and others; the fragments we have aſcribed to *Linus*, *Orpheus*, *Epicharmus*; The remains of *Sanchoniathon*, *Beroſus*, *Manetho*, *Philo Byblius*, *Euryſus* the *Pythagorean*, *Hipparchus*, *Amelius* the *Platoniſt*, *Heraclitus*, *Timæus*, *Chalcidi-*

* See above, p. 15.

cus (who writes of *Moſes*), *Homer*, *Heſiod*, *Callimachus*, *Ariſtophanes*, *Plato*, *Cicero*, *Ovid*, all theſe in what they ſay of the creation, agreee in the main with *Moſes's* account of it. *Homer*, *Heſiod*, *Callimachus*, *Ariſtobulus*, *Theophilus* of *Antioch*, *Lucian*, *Dion Caſſius*, *Suetonius*, *Joſephus*, *Philo*, *Tibullus*, mention, or allude to, the univerſal cuſtom of reſting every ſeventh day. The *Egyptian* writers, *Plato*, *Strabo*, *Ovid*, *Virgil*, and others, mention the ſtate of innocence, and the Fall. *Philo Byblius*, from *Sanchoniathon*, and *Plutarch*, ſhew, that ſeveral particulars of the Fall were received by the moſt antient heathens. *Ferdinand Mendeſius* teſtifies, that many particulars relating to *Adam*, *Eve*, the forbidden tree, and the ſerpent, are to be found among the natives of *Peru*, and the *Philippine* iſlands. And the name of *Adam* is known among the *Indian Brachmans*, which word has been by ſome thought to have been a corruption of *Abrahamans*; and it has been thought probable that the religion of *Zoroaſtres* and the *Magi* is derived from that patriarch. The truth of *Moſes's* account of the flood is atteſted by *Beroſus*, *Diodorus*, *Varro*, *Pliny*, *Plutarch*, *Lucian*, *Molo*, *Nicolaus Damaſcenus*, and others; ſome of whom mention the name of *Noah*, the ark, and the dove. *Joſephus Acoſta*, and *Antonio Herrera* affirm, that at *Cuba*, *Mechoana*, *Nicaragua*, and other parts of *America*, the memory of the flood, and the ark, are preſerved, and were found, with ſeveral other doctrines, of mere revelation,

upon the firſt diſcoveries of thoſe places by the *Europeans*. But to proceed, *Beroſus*, *Manetho*, *Heſiod*, *Nicolaus Damaſcenus*, and others, mention the age of the firſt men to have been almoſt a thouſand years. *Plutarch*, *Maximus Tyrius*, *Catullus*, and others, ſpeak of an intercourſe between God and men in antient times. *Porphyry*, *Jamblichus*, and others, ſpeak of angels. The hiſtory of the tower of *Babel*, under the poetical diſguiſe of the giants to ſcale heaven, is found in *Homer*, *Virgil*, *Horace*, *Ovid*, *Lucan*, and the *Sibylline* oracle quoted by *Joſephus*. *Diodorus Siculus*, *Strabo*, *Tacitus*, *Pliny*, and *Solinus*, mention the deſtruction of *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*. The hiſtory of *Abraham* and other patriarchs, agreeable to the writings of *Moſes*, is found in *Philo Byblius* from *Sanchoniathon*, and in *Beroſus*, *Hecatæus*, *Damaſcenus*, *Artapanus*, *Eupolemus*, *Demetrius*, and *Juſtin* from *Trogus Pompeius*, who alſo gives *Joſeph's* hiſtory agreeable to Scripture. By ſeveral of theſe the principal acts of *Moſes* are related. Of whom mention is alſo made by *Manetho*, *Lyſimachus*, *Chæremon*, *Diodorus Siculus*, *Longinus*, *Strabo*, *Pliny*, and *Tacitus*. *Diodorus* ſpeaks of the drying up of the *Red* ſea. *Herodotus*, *Diodorus*, *Strabo*, *Philo Byblius*, *Ariſtophanes*, *Tacitus*, *Horace*, and *Juvenal*, mention the ceremony of circumciſion. *Euſebius* tells us, that a book was written by *Eupolemus* on *Elijah's* miracles. The hiſtory of *Jonah* is in *Lycophron* and *Æneas Gazæus*. *Julian* the apoſtate owns that there were inſpired men

among the *Jews*. *Menander* mentions the great drought in the time of *Elijah*. The hiſtories of *David* and *Solomon* are given in a pretty full manner in the remains of the *Phœnician* Annals, and *Damaſcenus's* hiſtory, in *Eupolemus*, and *Dius's Phœnician* hiſtory, who ſpeaks of riddles, or hard queſtions, ſent betwixt *Solomon* and *Hiram*; of which alſo *Menander* the *Epheſian* hiſtorian, *Alexander Polybiſtor*, and others, give an account. *Hazael*, king of *Syria*, is mentioned by *Juſtin*. *Menander* the hiſtorian mentions *Salmanaſar*, who carried the *Iſraelites*, or ten tribes, into that captivity, from which they are not yet returned. The name and expeditions of *Sennacherib* king of *Aſſyria*, are found in *Beroſus's Chaldaics*, and *Herodotus's* hiſtory, which laſt relates the deſtruction of his vaſt army (2 *Kings* xvii.) with a mixture of fable. *Suetonius*, *Tacitus*, *Pliny* the younger, and *Numenius* teſtify, that there was ſuch a perſon as *Jeſus Chriſt*. His miracles are owned by *Celſus*, *Julian* the apoſtate, and the *Jewiſh* writers, who oppoſe Chriſtianity. *Porphyry*, though an enemy to the Chriſtian religion, ſays, "after *Chriſt* was worſhipped, no one received any benefit from the gods." *Suetonius*, *Tacitus*, *Pliny*, *Julian* the apoſtate, and the *Jewiſh* writers, mention his being put to death. And *Tacitus* affirms that many were put to death for their adherence to his religion. A very particular and favourable account of the character and behaviour of the firſt Chriſtians is given by *Pliny*,

Pliny, in a letter to the emperor *Trajan*, ſtill extant. *Phlegon*, in his Annals, mentions the miracles of St. *Peter*. And St. *Paul* is celebrated in a fragment of *Longinus* among eminent orators. The hiſtory of our Saviour's life, death, reſurrection, and aſcenſion, was declared by the apoſtles in the face of his enemies, and in the very country, where he lived, died, and roſe again. They wrote their accounts in *Greek*, which was univerſally underſtood, and related the things, as they paſſed a very few years before, and which muſt have been freſh in every body's memory. The name of *Jeſus* muſt have been entered in the public tables, or regiſters, at his birth. To which accordingly *Juſtin Martyr* and *Tertullian* appeal. And the account of his death and reſurrection muſt, according to the cuſtom, when any thing remarkable happened in any of the provinces of the empire, have been ſent to the court of *Rome*. The memory of the ſlaughter of the innocents is preſerved by *Auguſtus's* remark on *Herod's* cruelty. The miraculous darkneſs at our Saviour's crucifixion (which was undoubtedly ſupernatural; it being impoſſible that the ſun ſhould be eclipſed by the moon which was then in oppoſition) is affirmed by *Tertullian* to have been upon record in his time in the public regiſters. Our Saviour is ſeveral times mentioned by *Joſephus*; though not in ſuch a manner as ſo extraordinary a character deſerved. But nothing is more common than ſuch unexpected neglects in hiſtorians. Be-

ſides, it is probable that *Joſephus* might be under ſome conſtraint in touching on the ſubject of *Chriſt* and his religion; as he makes honourable mention of *John Baptiſt*, and of *James* the brother of *Jeſus*; to whoſe murder he aſcribes the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*.

Such public paſſages as the dumbneſs inflicted on *Zacharias*, while the people were waiting without the temple; of the wiſe men from the eaſt; of the murder of the innocents; of our Saviour's driving ſome hundreds, probably, of people out of the outer court of the temple, immediately after his triumph, which muſt have alarmed the whole city; the prodigies at his death; the dreadful end of *Judas Iſcariot*; the names of the *Roman* emperor, and governor, of *Herod*, of the high prieſt, of *Nicodemus*, of *Joſeph* of *Arimathæa*, of *Gamaliel*, *Dionyſius* the *Areopagite*, *Sergius Paulus*, *Simon Magus*, *Felix*, King *Agrippa*, *Tertullus*, *Gallio*, and many other perſons of the higheſt rank mentioned with great freedom, ſhew, that the hiſtorians were under no apprehenſion of being detected; and, at the ſame time, eſtabliſh the genuineneſs of the New Teſtament hiſtory by chronological and geographical evidences. Nor would any ſett of impoſtors have overloaded their ſcheme with ſuch a number of circumſtances no way neceſſary to it, for fear of commiting ſome blunder, which might have detected them. The miraculous power of inflicting death upon offenders, as in the caſe of *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, and

blindneſs

blindneſs in that of *Elymas*, was not a thing to be boaſted of, if it had not been true; becauſe of the danger of being called to account by the civil magiſtrate. And that the New Teſtament hiſtory is not a forgery of latter times, is much better eſtabliſhed, than that the Æneid, the Metamorphoſis, and *Horace's* works, were writ in the *Auguſtan* age. For none of them was authenticated by whole churches, nor are they cited by multitudes of authors cotemporary with them, as the apoſtolical writings are by *Barnabas*, *Clemens*, *Romanus*, *Ignatius*, *Polycarp*, and the reſt, and acknowledged to be the genuine works of the authors, whoſe names they bear, by enemies, as *Trypho*, *Julian* the Apoſtate, and others of the earlieſt ages, and authenticated by ſucceeding writers through every following period. The numerous antient apologiſts for Chriſtianity, in their addreſſes to the emperors, confirm the particulars of the New Teſtament hiſtory by their appeals to records then extant, and perſons then living. And hiſtory ſhews, that thoſe appeals were ſo convincing as to gain the Chriſtians from time to time favour and mercy from the emperors.

That the Moſaic hiſtory of the patriarchs, and their poſterity the *Jews* and *Iſraelites*, is genuine, is in a manner viſible at this day from the preſent circumſtances of that part of them, who are diſtinguiſhed from all other people, I mean the *Jews*, or the poſterity of the two tribes: for thoſe of the ten are, according to the predictions of prophecy,

prophecy, at preſent undiſtinguiſhed, though hereafter to be reſtored with their brethren the *Jews* to their own land. There is no ſuch minute and circumſtantial proof, that the *Italians* are the deſcendents of the antient *Romans*, or the *French* of the *Gauls*.

It is to be obſerved, that the miraculous and ſupernatural parts of the ſacred ſtory depend on the very ſame authority as the common, and are accordingly related in the ſame mannner; and the whole hangs ſo together, and reſts on the ſame foundation, that they muſt either be both true, or both falſe. But no one ever imagined the latter to be the caſe.

The ſimplicity of the Scripture accounts of the moſt ſtriking and amazing events any where related, their being deſcribed in the ſame artleſs and unaffected manner as the common occurrences of the hiſtory, is at leaſt a very ſtrong preſumption, that the relators had no deſign of any kind, but to give a true repreſentation of facts. Had *Moſes*, the moſt antient of hiſtorians, had any deſign to impoſe upon mankind, could he, in his account of the creation, the flood, the deſtruction of *Sodom* and *Gomorrha* by fire from heaven, of the eſcape of the *Iſraelitiſh* people from *Egyptian* tyranny, and their paſſage through the wilderneſs under his own conduct (a retreat more remarkable than that of the ten thouſand under *Xenophon*, which makes ſuch a figure in hiſtory) could the relator of theſe amazing events have

avoided

avoided expatiating and flouriſhing upon ſuch aſtoniſhing ſcenes, had they been mere invention? Would the fabulous writer of a ſett of adventures, of which himſelf was the fictitious hero, have ſpoke of himſelf with the modeſty which appears in the Moſaic hiſtory? Would he have repreſented himſelf as capable of timidity, diffidence, or paſſion? Would he have immortaliſed his own weakneſſes? Had the inventor of the ſcripture account of *Abraham*, and his poſterity, intended his fictitious hiſtory as an encomium upon that people, as *Virgil* did his Æneid on his countrymen, would he have repreſented them as a perverſe, diſobedient people, ſo often under the diſpleaſure of their God; condemned to wander forty years and periſh at laſt to the number of many thouſands in the wilderneſs, to the ſeeming diſparagement of the wiſdom of their leader; ever deviating into the worſhip of idols, contrary to what might have been expected from the numerous miracles wrought in their favour by the true God, a circumſtance very improper to be dwelt on, as being likely to bring the truth of thoſe miracles into queſtion with ſuperficial readers?

Would the inventors of the New Teſtament hiſtory, ſuppoſing it a fiction, have given an account of ſuch a ſeries of miracles in the cool and unaffected manner they do, had they not been genuine? Could they have avoided ſome flights of fancy in deſcribing ſuch wonders, as

the feeding of thouſands with almoſt nothing; the curing of diſeaſes, calming of tempeſts, driving evil ſpirits from their holds, and calling the dead out of their graves, with a word? Could they have given an account of the barbarities inflicted on the moſt innocent and amiable of all characters, without working up their narration to the pitch of a tragedy?

Muſt not a man be out of his wits before he could think of writing a ſett of grave directions about the conduct of miraculous and ſupernatural gifts, as of ſpeaking foreign languages, which the ſpeakers had never learned; foretelling future events, and the like; muſt not a man be diſtracted, who, in our times, when no ſuch miraculous gifts ſubſiſt, ſhould write of them as common and unqueſtionable? This the apoſtle *Paul*, one of the moſt judicious writers of antiquity, ſacred or profane, does in a variety of places; mentioning them incidentally and without going out of his way to prove the exiſtence of them, and even depreciating them in compariſon with moral virtues. What is to be concluded from hence, but that thoſe miraculous gifts were at that time as notorious, and common, as perhaps the knowledge of mathematics, or any other ſcience, is now among us?

Miracles being a very important part of the evidence for revelation, it is proper to conſider a little that ſubject. And firſt, one would wonder, that ever it ſhould have occurred to any perſon, that

that the proof from miracles is a weak or ſuſpicious one, ſuppoſing the miracles to be really ſuch, and nothing inconſiſtent in the doctrine they are brought in proof of. For nothing ſeems more reaſonable to expect, than that, if the Author of nature ſhould chooſe to be likewiſe author of a revelation, he ſhould ſhew his concern in the eſtabliſhment or promulgation of ſuch revelation, by exerting that power over nature, which we know he is poſſeſſed of, and for which we believe and adore him, as the Author of nature. Can any thing be more reaſonable to expect, than that He, who firſt breathed into man the breath of life, ſhould, in order to aſſure mankind, that a particular meſſage comes from Him, give power to thoſe he employs in carrying ſuch meſſage, to reſtore life to the dead; or than that He, who made the elements of the natural world, ſhould authenticate his revealed laws by giving to thoſe, whom he employs in promulgating them, a power over nature, a command of the elements of air and water; ſo that winds may ceaſe to rage, and waves to roll at their word? There is indeed all the reaſon in the world to believe, that thoſe very objectors againſt the propriety of miracles, as a proof of a revelation coming from God, would have found fault with Chriſtianity, had there been no account of miracles in Scripture, as deficient in one very ſtrong and convincing evidence of a Divine original.

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The proper definition of ſuch a miracle as may be ſuppoſed to be worked by Divine authority for proof of a revelation from God, is, An immediate and extraordinary effect of power ſuperior to all human; exhibited in preſence of a competent number of credible witneſſes, in ſuch manner as to be ſubject to their deliberate examination; expreſsly declared to be intended for eſtabliſhing a doctrine in itſelf reaſonable, and uſeful for the improvement of mankind in virtue.

Firſt, a proper miracle, in the theological ſenſe, muſt be an immediate and extraordinary effect of power, exhibited expreſsly for the purpoſe. For the application of any of the conſtant and regular powers or properties of natural bodies, in however artful, or to common people inconceivable, a manner, is no miracle; elſe all the arts, eſpecially chemiſtry, might be ſaid to be ſyſtems of miracles. The pretended miracle of the liquefaction of the blood of ſaint *Januarius*, with which the prieſts in popiſh countries yearly delude the ignorant people, is no more than the natural effect of a certain liquor dropped upon a maſs of a particular gummy, or reſinous ſubſtance, which diſſolves in a manner as little miraculous, as that of a lump of ſugar, upon which water is dropped. But to proceed. The miraculous work performed muſt be the effect of a power *ſuperior* to all *human*. It is not neceſſary, that it be ſuperior to angelic power. Becauſe

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our beſt notions of the Divine oeconomy lead us to believe, that ſpiritual beings are the inſtruments of God for the advantage of mankind. So that while we believe this, to queſtion a miracle performed by a good angel, would be inſulting Heaven itſelf. And we may reaſonably conclude from the tendency of the doctrine or laws to be eſtabliſhed, whether the miracle is wrought by a good or evil being, according to our Saviour's reaſoning, *Matth.* xii. 25. A miracle performed in confirmation of a doctrine tending to promote and eſtabliſh virtue in the world, and to defeat the deſigns which evil beings may have againſt mankind, may reaſonably be concluded to be wrought by the power, not of a fiend, but a good ſpirit, and contrariwiſe. For it is reaſonable to expect a being to exert his power for the advancement of what is agreeable to his own character, and not for the contrary purpoſe.

Some miracles may be conceived not to be *clearly*, and *indiſputably*, above all human power; and yet to be genuine miracles. Some of the works of *Moſes* were ſuch, that the *Egyptian* artiſts could imitate them in ſome manner, deluſive indeed, and defective; but which rendered it at leaſt diſputable whether they were wholly above human power, or not. Nor is it neceſſary, that every divine miſſion be ſo authenticated as to put its genuineneſs beyond all *poſſible queſtion*. It is enough, if, upon the whole, there be a conſiderable

ſiderable overbalance of credibility. For, after all, direct revelations of all kinds, are ever to be conſidered as *exuberancies* of Divine goodneſs; as advantages *beyond* what rational agents, in moſt caſes, have any ground to expect; and are therefore by no means to be thought deficient, if they want this or that evidence, and be not attended with all the circumſtances of conviction which our fantaſtical imaginations could invent. The leaſt and loweſt degree of ſupernatural aſſiſtance is more than we had any reaſon to expect, or pretence to demand. And had we never been bleſt with any clear and extenſive revelation, we ſhould have been altogether without excuſe in acting a wicked part, and ſtifling the light of natural conſcience.

Others of the Scripture miracles, and thoſe by far the moſt conſiderable part, are ſuch as to be clearly and unqueſtionably above all human power. Of this ſort are the dividing of the *Red* ſea, the curing inveterate diſeaſes with a word, and raiſing the dead.

A miracle ought (in order to its being received by thoſe who were not eye-witneſſes) to have been wrought in the preſence of ſuch a number of credible witneſſes, as to render it unlikely that there ſhould have been any deluſion. Though it may be poſſible, that the ſenſes of one or two perſons may be deceived, it is not to be ſuppoſed, that thoſe of any number ſhould. And the greater the number of the witneſſes is (ſuppoſing them

them credible) the probability of their being all at the ſame time under a deluſion becomes the leſs, till it comes to be wholly incredible and inconceivable. And then their teſtimony becomes unqueſtionable. This neceſſary condition effectually excludes ſuch pretended miracles as thoſe of *Mahomet's* viſion, which paſſed wholly *without witneſs*. For our Saviour's reaſoning is undeniably juſt; *if a man bear record of himſelf, his record is not true*; that is, the mere aſſertion of a perſon, who, for any thing that appears, may be intereſted to deceive, is not a ſufficient ground of credit. On this account alſo that moſt monſtrous inſult upon all the ſenſes and faculties of mankind, Tranſubſtantiation, is effectually cut off from all pretenſions to the character of a miracle. For the wafer is ſo far from having been ever turned into a whole *Chriſt* before any credible witneſs, or witneſſes; that every perſon, before whom it has been attempted or pretended to be done, has had, or might have had, the aſſurances of both ſenſe and underſtanding, that it remained ſtill as much wafer as ever.

The witneſſes of a miracle muſt be credible. They muſt be under no viſible temptation to deceive; and they muſt be perſons of ſuch underſtanding as to be equal to the examination of the pretended miracle. The pretended miracles of the papiſts may on very juſt grounds be ſuſpected; as we know what immenſe profits that worldly church gets by deluding the people.

The workers of the Scripture miracles were under no temptation to bribe witneſſes, but quite to the contrary. For they all loſt, and none of them gained any thing ſecular by their works. *Moſes* forſook the court of *Pharaoh*, to wander many years in a wilderneſs, and die there. The prophets ſuffered perſecution and death for their plainneſs in reproving the faſhionable vices of their times. The bleſſed Saviour of the world, and his apoſtles, and the firſt proſelytes to Chriſtianity, expoſed themſelves to every kind of affliction and diſtreſs, and to violent and infamous deaths. So that they cannot, with any ſhadow of reaſon, be ſuſpected of having bribed witneſſes to teſtify to their miracles; nor indeed had they any ſecular advantage to offer in order to gain proſelytes.

The witneſſes of a ſuppoſed miracle muſt, in order to its credibility, be ſuppoſed perſons of ſuch underſtanding, as to be equal to the examination of the fact. Now the Scripture-miracles were performed before ſuch numbers, that, according to the common courſe of human capacities, they muſt have been ſeen and examined by many perſons, not only of ſufficient underſtanding for enquiring into a ſimple fact, but of more ſhrewdneſs and ſagacity than ordinary. Nor was there any ſuperior capacity neceſſary to determine whether the *Red-ſea* was really miraculouſly divided, when the thouſands of *Iſrael* paſſed through it in full march, and ſaw the waters

waters as a wall on their right hand, and on their left. Nor was there any occaſion for great ſagacity to convince thoſe who ſaw ſome hundreds of diſeaſed people healed with a word, that real miracles were wrought. Nor was there any ſubtlety of diſcernment neceſſary to convince the diſciples of *Chriſt*, who had converſed with him for ſeveral years, who heard him ſpeak as never man ſpoke, that he, who after his death appeared to ſeveral hundreds together, and often converſed intimately with the eleven, for ſix weeks, was the ſame perſon, their well-known Lord and Maſter, whom they ſaw crucified on mount *Calvary*.

It is ſaid in the above definition of a proper miracle, that, in order to credibility, it is neceſſary, that the effect be ſuch as to be ſubject to the full examination of the ſpectators. There are very few of the Scripture-miracles that were not of too ſubſtantial and permanent a nature, to be in any manner imitated by the *præſtigiæ*, or tricks of impoſtors. A ſudden appearance, for a ſhort time, of any ſtrange and unaccountable kind, might be queſtioned. But a body diſeaſed for many years, cured with a word, a withered limb reſtored in a moment, a diſtracted brain inſtantly redreſſed, a dæmon authoritatively diſpoſſeſſed, a man four days buried, recalled to life; theſe are effects of power too ſubſtantial to be miſtaken; and too laſting to be ſuſpected of having paſſed through a ſuperficial examination.

Laſtly, it is ſaid in the above definition of a proper and credible miracle, that it muſt be declared by the worker of it to be wrought expreſsly in confirmation of ſome particular doctrine, which doctrine muſt be ſuch as to commend itſelf to the unprejudiced reaſon of mankind, and to bear the marks of a revelation worthy of God, and uſeful for men. A miracle, or wonderful effect, connected with no particular doctrine, is to be called a natural or artificial phænomenon, or a prodigy; not a miracle in a theological ſenſe, which laſt alone is what we are at preſent concerned with.

No miracle whatever, nor any number of miracles, would be ſufficient to prove twice two to be five. Becauſe we are more clearly and undoubtedly certain of the proportions of numbers, than of any thing ſupernatural. And all miracles are ſupernatural. And it would be abſurd to imagine that the infinitely wiſe Author of reaſon ſhould expect us to queſtion the *certain* information of our reaſon upon evidence *leſs certain.*

Again, if miracles are pretended to be wrought in proof of a doctrine which leads to any vicious or impious practice, as we may, by a proper examination, and due uſe of our faculties, be more certain, that ſuch a doctrine cannot be from God, than we can be, that a pretended miracle, in ſupport of it, is from him, it is plain, we are to reject both the doctrine and pretended miracle,

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as inſufficient againſt the clear and unqueſtionable dictates of reaſon. But if miracles, anſwering in every part the above definition, are wrought before credible witneſſes, in expreſs atteſtation of a doctrine, though not diſcoverable by reaſon, yet not contradictory to it, and tending to the advancement of virtue and happineſs, we ought in any reaſon to conclude ſuch miracles, when properly atteſted, to have been performed by the power of God, or of ſome being authoriſed by him; and may judge ourſelves ſafe in receiving them as ſuch; becauſe we cannot ſuppoſe that God would leave his creatures in a ſtate obnoxious to remedileſs deluſion; nay, we cannot but think it criminal to neglect, or oppoſe, miracles in ſuch a manner atteſted, or the doctrine intended to be eſtabliſhed by them.

It has been objected againſt the account, we have in Scripture, of innumerable miracles performed by *Moſes*, and the prophets, *Chriſt*, and his apoſtles; That it is not likely, they ſhould be true, becauſe we have none ſuch in our times. That, as we have no experience of miracles, we have no reaſon to believe that ever there were any performed.

Suppoſing it were ſtrictly true, that we have no experience, or ocular conviction, of the poſſibility of miracles, which is by no means to be taken for granted; thoſe who urge this objection, would do well to conſider, before they embark their unbelief upon it, how far it will

carry them. If, becauſe we ſee no miracles now, we may ſafely argue, that there never were any, it will be as good ſenſe to ſay, Becauſe we now ſee an earth, a ſun, moon, and ſtars; there never was a time, when they were not; there never was a time, when the Divine wiſdom governed his natural, or moral ſyſtem otherwiſe than he does now; there are no different ſtates of things, nor any different exigencies in conſequence of thoſe differences; it is abſurd to conceive of any change in any one particular, or in the general oeconomy of the univerſe.

The account we have in the New Teſtament, of the dæmoniacs miraculouſly cured by our Saviour, has, particularly, been thought to pinch ſo hard, that ſome have, in order to get rid of the difficulty, attempted, (in my humble opinion, altogether unwarrantably) to explain away the whole doctrine of poſſeſſion by ſpirits. How comes it, ſay the objectors, that we read of ſuch numbers of perſons in *Chriſt's* time poſſeſſed with dæmons; while we have no inſtances of any ſuch in our days? To this ſome gentlemen, whoſe abilities I ſhould be proud to equal, and of whoſe ſincere belief of Chriſtianity I have no more doubt than of my own, have given an anſwer, which I cannot help thinking extremely hurtful to the cauſe. "The dæmoniacs," ſay thoſe gentlemen, "were no more than mad "people, who were not then, nor are now, poſſeſ-"ſed with ſpirits, any more than other diſeaſed "perſons.

"perſons. There being ſpoken of as poſſeſſed, "was no other than a common way of expreſſing "their diſeaſe or diſtreſs; and the diſpoſſeſſing "them, was only the cure; which was ſtill mi-"raculous." But, if any man can reconcile this notion with the accounts we have from the evangeliſts, he muſt have a key, which, I own, I am not maſter of. That a ſett of grave hiſtorians, ſacred hiſtorians, ſhould fill up their narration with accounts of what was ſaid by ſuch a number of madmen; that thoſe madmen ſhould univerſally ſpeak to better purpoſe, than the bulk of thoſe, who were in their ſenſes; that they ſhould at once, the firſt moment they caſt their eyes on our Saviour, know him to be the *Chriſt*, while ſome even of his own diſciples hardly knew what to think of him; that our Saviour himſelf ſhould enumerate his caſting out evil ſpirits, beſides curing diſeaſes, as a miracle entirely ſeparate, and of its own kind, and mention his conqueſt over *Satan* and his wicked ſpirits, as a mark of his being the true *Meſſiah*; that he ſhould allow his diſciples to continue in a miſtake with reſpect to a point of ſuch conſequence; that he ſhould adviſe them to rejoice more in the thought of their names being written in heaven, than in their having received power over ſpirits, without telling them at the ſame time, that they were altogether in a miſtake about their having received any ſuch power; that we ſhould be gravely told that the madneſs (not the ſpirits)

which poſſeſſed the men in the tombs, intreated our Saviour to ſend it into the herd of ſwine; that the madneſs (not the ſpirit) ſhould ſo often intreat and adjure him not to ſend it to the place of torment before the time, that is, probably, before the laſt judgment, or perhaps an earlier period ſpoken of in the *Apocalypſe*; that all theſe ſolemn accounts ſhould be given in ſuch a hiſtory, and nothing to ſhew them to be figurative, nor, as far as I can ſee, any poſſibility of at all underſtanding them otherwiſe than literally; ſeems wholly unaccountable. Nor can I help thinking that the ſolution is incomparably harder to grapple with than the difficulty. I deny not, that there are paſſages in the goſpels, where a diſeaſe is in one place ſpoken of as an infliction of an evil ſpirit, and in another as a mere diſeaſe. But this does not at all affect the point in diſpute; becauſe the queſtion is not, Whether the dæmoniacs ſpoken of in the goſpels were not perſons labouring under a bodily complaint beſides the poſſeſſion by evil ſpirits; but, Whether the people ſaid to be poſſeſſed, were at all poſſeſſed, or not. If a perſon, whoſe brain was diſtempered, was likewiſe poſſeſſed with an evil ſpirit, he might with ſufficient propriety be ſpoke of in one place as a lunatic, and in another as a dæmoniac.

I ſhould humbly judge it a much more eaſy and natural way of getting over this difficulty, to proceed upon our Saviour's anſwer to his diſciples concerning

concerning the man born blind. "Neither did "this man ſin," ſays he (in any extraordinary manner) "nor his parents; but that the works of "God might be made manifeſt in him." If the whole human ſpecies are offenders, and at all times deſerving of puniſhment, where is the difficulty of conceiving, that it might be ſuitable to the Divine ſcheme of government, that at the time of our Saviour's appearance, or any other period, a greater variety of puniſhments might be ſuffered to fall upon a guilty race of beings, and afterwards, through the Divine mercy, their ſufferings might be abated. Particularly, is there not even a propriety in God's giving to *Satan* and his angels, the antient and inveterate oppoſers of the *Meſſiah*, and his kingdom, a ſhort triumph over mankind, in order to render the *Meſſiah's* victory over him more conſpicuous, and more glorious. This I ſay on the ſuppoſition, that poſſeſſion by evil ſpirits was altogether peculiar to thoſe antient times; and that there is at preſent abſolutely no ſuch thing in any country in the world. But, before any perſon can poſitively affirm, that there is no ſuch thing in our times, as poſſeſſion by ſpirits, he muſt be ſure of his knowing perfectly the natures and powers of ſpirits, and be able to ſhew the abſolute impoſſibility of a ſpirit's having communication with embodied minds; and muſt be capable of ſhewing, that all

all the ſymptoms and appearances in diſeaſes, in madneſs, and in dreams, are utterly inconſiſtent with the notion of ſpirits having any concern with our ſpecies. Now to eſtabliſh this negative, will be ſo far from being eaſy to do, that, on the contrary, univerſal opinion, as well as probability, and the whole current of revelation, are on the oppoſite ſide. Who can ſay, that it is abſurd to imagine ſuch a ſtate of the human frame, eſpecially of the brain, as may give ſpiritual agents an opportunity of making impreſſions upon the mind? Who can ſay, that ſleep may not lay the mind open to the impreſſions of foreign beings; and that waking again may not, by ſome laws of nature unknown to us, exclude their communications? Who can ſay, that part (I do not ſay all) of the ſymptoms in phrenetic, epileptic, lunatic, and melancholic caſes, eſpecially in the more violent paroxyſms, may not be owing to the agency of ſpirits? Were this to be allowed, it would not at all vacate the uſe of medicines, or dieting. For if the acceſs of ſpirits to our minds depends upon the ſtate of our bodies, which it is no way abſurd to ſuppoſe, it is evident, an alteration in the ſtate of the body may prevent their acceſs to our minds, and deprive them of all power over us; and in that light, medicines and regimen may be effectual even againſt ſpirits, ſo far as they may be concerned, by being ſo againſt the natural diſorder

diſorder of the frame occaſioned merely by the diſeaſe. So that there may, for any thing we know to the contrary, be dreams, in which foreign agents may be concerned, and there may be others occaſioned by mere fumes of indigeſtion, as the poet ſpeaks. There may be epileptics, and maniacs, who are ſo from mere obſtructions and diſorders in the brain and nerves; and there may at this day be others attacked by thoſe maladies, whoſe diſtreſs may be heightened by wicked ſpirits. The amazing ſtrength of even women, and youths, in ſome of their violent fits, ſeems to countenance a ſuſpicion, that ſomething acts in them, ſeparate from their own natural force, and which is hardly to be accounted for from any extraordinary flow of animal ſpirits. And why in Scripture we ſhould have ſo many accounts of revelations communicated in dreams; from whence probably the Heathens, ever ſince *Homer*, have had the ſame notion; ſeems unaccountable upon any other foot, than that of ſuppoſing ſome natural mechanical connexion between a particular ſtate of the bodily frame, and communications from ſeparate ſpirits. The behaviour of the prophet in the Old Teſtament, who calls for an inſtrument of muſic, when he waits for an inſpiration, does likewiſe countenance the ſame notion. As if the natural effect of melody was to open the way to the mind in a mechanical manner, in order to the more full admiſſion of the ſupernatural communications. To conclude

what

what I would ſay on the difficulty of the dæmoniacs in the goſpel-hiſtory, I do not pretend to decide which is the true ſolution. All I contend for is, That to explain away the reality of the preſence of ſpirits, is, in my opinion, unwarrantable and dangerous, and removing a leſs difficulty, to put a greater in its place.

To return to the general objection, I was upon before this digreſſion, which was, That we have no reaſon to believe there ever were any miracles, becauſe we have no experience of any in our times; I have to ſay farther, that the objection is not founded upon truth; at leaſt not upon an unqueſtionable truth. For many perſons of good judgment have declared it to be their opinion, that among the innumerable fictitious accounts of ſupernatural appearances, and prodigies, ſome, even in theſe later ages, are in ſuch a manner authenticated, that to deny them, a man muſt deny every information he can receive by any means whatever, beſides his own immediate ſenſes, which does not ſeem highly rational. Beſides, are not the completions of a multitude of prophecies, which we have at this day extant before our eyes, as the predicted laſting ruinous ſtate of *Babylon* and *Tyre*, the total ſubjection, to the lateſt ages, of the once illuſtrious kingdom of *Egypt*, the remaining marks of the general deluge; the unequalled and unaccountable condition of the *Jews* for ſo long a period of time; the eſtabliſhment, and continuance to the end of the

world, of the Chriſtian religion, are not theſe ſtanding miracles conſpicuous in our time? But of this more elſewhere. Upon the whole, it is evident, that if the objection was founded on truth, it could not be valid; becauſe different periods may require different meaſures of government; and to ſay that there could never have been any miracles, becauſe there are none now (were it true, that there are no effects of miraculous interpoſition remaining in our times) would be as abſurd, as to ſay, that the axis of the earth muſt point exactly the ſame way it did two thouſand years ago; whereas the obſervations of antient aſtronomers have put the doctrine of its continual change of direction, and the preceſſion of the equinoxes, out of all poſſible doubt. But if the objection is not founded upon truth, it muſt of courſe fall to the ground.

Prophecy is a miraculous hiſtory, or account of events before they happen. This being unqueſtionably above the reach of human capacity, it is a proper and convincing evidence, that the revelation, in which it is given, is not a human production. To pretend to determine the foundation, or the *modus*, of the preſcience of the actions of free agents, may be wholly out of our reach in the preſent ſtate. But we can form ſome conception of its being poſſible, in ſome ſuch manner as the following, though it may not perhaps be ſafe to affirm, that the following is the true account of it.

Do we not commonly ſee inſtances of very ſound judgments paſſed by wiſe men on the future conduct of others? May we not ſuppoſe, that angels, or other beings of ſuperior reach, may be capable, from their more exact knowledge of human nature, to paſs a much more certain judgment of the future behaviour of our ſpecies? And is there any thing leſs to be expected, than that He who made us, who perfectly knows our frame, who immediately perceives the moſt ſecret motions of our minds, and likewiſe foreſees with the utmoſt exactneſs, and without a poſſibility of being deceived, the whole preceding and concurrent circumſtances in which any of his creatures can at any future time be engaged (as it is evident, that all things are the effect of his directing providence, except the actions of free creatures, to whom he has given liberty and power of action within a certain ſphere) is any thing leſs to be expected, I ſay, than that our infinitely wiſe Creator ſhould form a judgment, ſuitable to his wiſdom, of the future conduct of his creatures? And to imagine that this judgment ſhould at all affect the future behaviour of the creature, ſeems as groundleſs as to conclude that one created being's judging of the future conduct of another ſhould actually influence and over rule his conduct. The judgment is, by the ſuppoſition, formed upon the character of the perſon judged of; not the character influenced by the judgment. There are ſome paſſages of Scripture,

Scripture, which ſeem to lead us to this manner of conception of this difficult point.

When *David* (1 *Sam.* xxii. 12.) purſued by the inveterate hatred of king *Saul*, conſulted the oracle, whether, if he ſtaid in the city of *Keilah*, the people of that city would give him up to his enemy; the anſwer he received was, That they would. It is plain in this caſe, that the Divine preſcience of the conduct of that people, in the event of *David's* truſting himſelf in their hands, did not ariſe from God's having decreed, that they ſhould give up *David*: for if it had been decreed, it muſt have come to paſs. Nor was their treachery foreknown becauſe it was future. For it was not future, having been diſappointed, and never coming to be executed. Nor could it be eventually predetermined, that in caſe of *David's* ſtaying in the city, the people ſhould give him up into the hands of his enemy. For the event ſhews, that it was not the Divine ſcheme, that he ſhould fall into the ſnare, but that he ſhould eſcape it. There ſeems nothing therefore left to conclude, but that the Divine preſcience of the conduct of the people of *Keilah* was founded in a thorough and perfect inſight into the treacherous character of that people, and perhaps the knowledge of actual deſigns formed by them to betray *David* into the hands of the king.

Again, when God foretells (*Gen.* xviii. 19.) that *Abraham* would "command his houſhold

" after him, and they would keep the way of " the Lord;" He plainly ſhews upon what that preſcience was grounded, in ſaying, " I *know* " him, that he will command, &c." That is, I ſo fully know his zeal and affection for the true God, that I foreſee, he will ſet up and ſupport my worſhip in his family, and enjoin it his poſterity, in oppoſition to the idolatry and polytheiſm which prevails among the heathen around.

In the ſame manner, in the New Teſtament, though the apoſtle *Paul* foretells, that there ſhould not be a life loſt of thoſe who ſailed with him, notwithſtanding the ſeverity of the tempeſt; we find afterwards, that the predictions depended upon the ſailors ſtaying in the ſhip. So that probably what was foreſeen, was, that the ſhip and crew might be ſaved by the ſkill of the ſailors; and that, if they deſerted it, it muſt periſh.

Theſe, and other paſſages, which might be quoted, ſeem to favour the preceding attempt to ſolve part of the difficulty of the Divine preſcience of the actions of free creatures. But it muſt ſtill be confeſſed, that the ſubject is involved in ſuch intricacies as we ſhall not in all probability be able to clear up in the preſent ſtate. However it be, we are not immediately concerned with any thing, but what may affect our doing our duty. And that neither preſcience, nor any thing elſe, does any way abridge our freedom in performing that, and ſo ſecuring our final happineſs,

neſs, we need not uſe any reaſoning to be convinced. We have no other aſſurance that we exiſt, than feeling. And we have the ſame for our freedom. Every man feels, that in all his actions, whether virtuous, vicious, or indifferent, he is naturally free. And what we feel we cannot bring ourſelves ſeriouſly to doubt, if we would; though we may cavil at any thing.

That many parts of Scripture-prophecy, not yet accompliſhed, are obſcure, and of doubtful ſignification; ſo that the moſt learned interpreters are divided in their ſentiments about what may be intended by them; muſt be acknowledged. And that this is no more, than might have been expected, will appear by conſidering, that had many future events been too clearly predicted, the obſtinacy of men might have rendered miracles neceſſary upon every occaſion to bring about the completion of them.

With all the pretended obſcurity of prophecy, there are ſtill enough of unqueſtionable and conſpicuous completions, to ſhew, that the predictions of Scripture were given, not by chance, nor by bold conjecture, nor by partial informations from evil ſpirits, as ſome have thought was the caſe of ſome of the reſponſes of the heathen oracles; but by One, who ſaw through futurity, down to the moſt diſtant periods, from the time of their being given out; by Him, who holds the reins of government in his own hand. The

few following examples may ſerve as a proof of this.

Moſes, in his account of the deluge, (*Gen.* viii. 21, 22.) aſſures mankind, in the name of God, that there ſhould never be another univerſal flood; but that the four ſeaſons of the year, and the revolutions of day and night, ſhould go on without interruption to the end of the world. This is one of thoſe predictions, which could not have been written ſince the event, as has been pretended, in derogation of ſome others; the period taken in by it not being yet concluded. And conſidering the extraordinary wiſdom ſo conſpicuous in the character of *Moſes*, it does not ſeem conceivable, that he, who expected to have the opinion of future ages as an inſpired perſon, ſhould, without Divine authority, have ventured his whole character upon ſuch an affirmation as this, which he could have let alone; leſt the event ſhould have detected him for an impoſtor. For how could he know, without inſpiration, what change in nature might happen, which might totally change the courſe of days, nights, and ſeaſons? How could he know, that there might not happen ſome ſuch revolution in his own times, to the utter ruin of his character as a prophet? How could he know, that another deluge might not come according to the order of nature; and as he had publiſhed the account of the preſervation of *Noah* and his family in the ark, was it not natural to expect, that upon the leaſt

leaſt appearance of ſuch another judgment, people would ſet about making arks for their own ſafety, which would have proved the total degrading of his character, as a prophet, and a lawgiver. The event hitherto has anſwered the prediction, and, in all probability, future ages will fully prove it to have been given from God.

The ſame wiſe lawgiver of the *Jews* founded a very important part of that conſtitution in a manner extremely injudicious, and improvident, if we ſuppoſe him not to have acted upon Divine authority. What I refer to, is his confining the prieſthood, which he declares to be everlaſting, to the ſingle family of *Aaron*. Had he not done this upon Divine authority, he muſt have run an obvious hazard of the downfall of the religious polity he was ſetting up, by the poſſible failure of male iſſue in *Aaron's* family, who had only two ſons, *Eleazor* and *Ithamar*. This part of the Moſaic conſtitution may therefore be conſidered as a prediction, that in a courſe of ſeveral thouſand years, there ſhould not be wanting male iſſue proceeding from one ſingle family, at that time conſiſting only of two perſons, Had this prediction failed; had theſe two perſons, or their poſterity, been cut off, by natural death, or by an enemy, the whole *Jewiſh* oeconomy muſt have ſunk, for want of a prieſthood, and all the prophecies had been falſified, or had never been given.

In the book of *Jeremiah*, chap. L. and following, it is foretold, that *Babylon*, the greateſt city, and ſeat of the greateſt empire at that time in the world, ſhould not only be deſtroyed, but that it ſhould *never* be again inhabited. Which laſt particular no man of prudence or judgment would have ventured his credit as a prophet upon, when he could have avoided giving any ſuch prediction, unleſs he had been by Divine inſpiration aſſured of what he affirmed. For nothing could well be imagined more improbable, than that the ſeat of the empire of the world ſhould be deſtroyed; and ſtill more unlikely was it, that it ſhould never be rebuilt. But the event ſhews the truth of the prophecy. And this prediction is likewiſe one of thoſe of which it cannot be pretended that it was written ſince the event.

In *Ezek.* xxx. 13. it is expreſsly foretold, that there ſhould be "no more a prince of the land of *Egypt*." No man of judgment would have ventured, without authority, his credit upon ſuch an aſſeveration, as he could have been wholly ſilent on the head. For who could know, without inſpiration, that there ſhould never more a prince a native of *Egypt*, ſit on the throne of that kingdom? The event however has verified the prediction. For ſoon after the time when it was given, *Egypt* was made a province of the *Perſian* empire, and has been governed ever ſince by foreigners, having been, ſince the fall of the *Perſian* monarchy, ſubject ſucceſſively to the *Macedonians*,

donians, the *Saracens*, the *Mamalukes*, and the *Turks*, who poſſeſs it at preſent. This is one of thoſe prophecies againſt which it cannot be objected, that it is poſſible it may have been written ſince the event.

In the xxvith chap. of *Ezekiel* it is foretold, that the great and powerful city of *Tyre*, at that time the general reſort of traders, and mart of the world, ſhould be *utterly deſolate*, ſo as to be a place for the *ſpreading of nets*, and ſhould *never more be rebuilt*. This prediction, at the time it was given ſo utterly improbable, has been literally fulfilled, as may be ſeen in *Maundrell's* Voyage. And Dr. *Pococke*, late biſhop of *Oſſory*, ſays, in his Travels in the Eaſt, that as he ſailed by the place where it formerly ſtood, he ſaw the ruins of it covered with fiſhing nets.

The Scriptures of both old and new Teſtament are full of predictions of the diſperſion of the *Jews* for a long period of time, as a puniſhment for their vices, and of their being at laſt reſtored to their own land in great triumph and happineſs. So early as the days of *Moſes*, whoſe æra profane hiſtory confirms to have been about the time we place it, *viz.* above three thouſand years ago, we have predictions of the ruin which was to come upon that people in caſe of their diſobedience (and which did come accordingly) ſo clear and explicit, that no writer of our times, with the help of hiſtory, and particularly, *Joſephus's* account of the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and with

the advantage of knowing the preſent unhappy condition of that people almoſt in all the countries of the world but our own, could in an imitation of the prophetic ſtyle deſcribe their caſe more exactly. In the xxviiith chapter of *Deuteronomy*, *Moſes* threatens their diſobedience with judgments and plagues of every kind; particularly that they ſhould "become an aſtoniſhment, a proverb, and a by-word in all countries;" that "an enemy ſhould come upon them as ſwiftly as eagles," probably alluding to their conqueſt by the *Romans*; that they ſhould in the ſeverity of the ſiege be reduced "to eat their very children;" that they ſhould be "ſcattered through all countries of the world;" and that they ſhould be forced "to ſerve other gods," as they accordingly are, in the countries, where the inquiſition is eſtabliſhed, obliged to worſhip the hoſt, which numbers of them comply with, though a groſs violation of the ſecond commandment, to avoid falling into the hands of that mercileſs court; and that among the nations where they ſhould be ſcattered, they ſhould "have no eaſe nor reſt," but a trembling "heart," and "failing of eyes," and "ſorrow," and "continual fear for their lives," with many other threatnings to the ſame purpoſe.

It is alſo foretold by the following prophets, as well as by *Moſes*, that, notwithſtanding this unexampled diſperſion of the *Jews* into all nations, they ſhould be ſtill preſerved a diſtinct people;

that God "will not deſtroy them utterly," but that "when they ſhall call to mind, among all "the nations, whither God has driven them, and "ſhall return to the Lord, he will turn their "captivity, and gather them from all the nati-"ons—from the fartheſt parts of the earth—"even in the LATTER days." That "though "he makes a full end of all other nations," (by revolutions, and mixtures of one people with another, which renders it impoſſible to diſtinguiſh their genuine deſcendants) "yet he will "not make a full end of them;" but "a rem-"nant of them" ſhall be kept unmixed with any other people, and "ſhall return out of all coun-"tries whither God has driven them;" that he will "ſet up an enſign for the nations, and will "aſſemble the outcaſts of ISRAEL," and "ga-"ther together the diſperſed of *Judah*" (the poſterity of the ten tribes; at preſent, according to ſcripture-prophecy undiſtinguiſhed; as well as of the two) "from the four corners of the earth; which ſhews that the return here ſpoken of, is not that from the *Babyloniſh* captivity; as is alſo evident from its being fixed to the "latter days," and from its being alſo ſpoken of by the prophet *Hoſea*, who lived after the return from the ſeventy years captivity at *Babylon*, and by *Ezekiel*, who lived in the captivity itſelf.

And in the New Teſtament it is clearly foretold by *Chriſt*, that *Jeruſalem* ſhould be deſtroyed with ſuch deſtruction "as had not been ſince

" the beginning of the world, nor ever ſhould " be." And it is remarkable that he again expreſsly mentions the " eagles;" in all probability to point out the *Romans*, (who bore eagles on their ſtandards) for the executioners of the Divine vengeance on that perverſe people. *Joſephus's* hiſtory of that tragical complication of events, correſponds exactly to our Saviour's prediction of it. He alſo foretells that the *Jews* ſhould be carried " captive into all nations, and that *Jeruſalem* " ſhould be trodden down of the *Gentiles*, till the " times of the *Gentiles* ſhould be fulfilled." In the Epiſtles there are various predictions to the ſame purpoſe. And we accordingly ſee that people to this day preſerved diſtinct from all others in the world, without king, without country, without government to enforce the obſervance of their ceremonial law, which yet they keep up with great ſtrictneſs, wherever they can.

That through all the changes, which have happened in all the other kingdoms of the earth, from the date of the firſt of theſe predictions to the preſent time (a period of more than three thouſand years) that people ſhould have had exactly the fortune that was foretold them by *Moſes*; and that they ſhould now in ſo wonderful and unexampled a manner be preſerved unmixed with, and eaſily diſtinguiſhable from, the people of all the countries where they are ſcattered; and this in ſpite of the cruel uſage they have had in moſt countries, which might have been expected

pected to have driven them long ago to give up their religion, and mix with the people among whom they lived; and that there ſhould nothing in this long courſe of years have happened, to render it impoſſible, but that, on the contrary, it ſhould be probable, that the remaining prediction of their return to their own land, will be accompliſhed, as well as the reſt; this gives, upon the whole, ſuch a view, as is not to be equalled by any thing elſe in the world; the moſt amazing of all phænomena; and ſhews that prophecy is given by authority from the ſame by whom the government of the world is carried on; ſince none but He, or whom he authoriſes, could thus declare the end from beginning.

No one can imagine the following predictions to be applicable to any other than the *Meſſiah*. *Gen.* iii. 15. the firſt prediction is given of him, *viz.* That "the ſeed of the woman "ſhould bruiſe the head of the ſerpent." None but *Chriſt* could properly be called the ſeed of the "woman." For he alone was born of a woman without concurrence of man. Nor did any one but he effectually bruiſe the head of the ſerpent, or deſtroy the power of *Satan*. Again, he is ſeveral different times afterwards promiſed to *Abraham*, as he in whom "all the families of the earth ſhould "be bleſſed." Now, there never was any ſingle perſon, beſides *Chriſt*, who was a bleſſing to the "whole world." *Gen.* xlix. it is foretold that the

the "ſceptre ſhould not depart from *Judah*, till "*Shiloh* ſhould come," and that "to him ſhould "be the gathering of the people." It is known, that the *Jews* became ſubject to the *Romans* about the time of the appearance of *Chriſt*. And the gathering of the people to him is very conſpicuous in the general diffuſion of his religion over moſt parts of the world. The words of *Moſes*, *Deut.* xviii. 15. are applicable to none but *Chriſt* only. "The Lord ſhall raiſe up unto thee "a Prophet, from the midſt of thee, like unto "me." But no prophet, prieſt, or king, ever roſe among that people like to *Moſes*, but *Chriſt* only. For from *Moſes* to *Chriſt*, no lawgiver aroſe among the *Jews*; their ſtate being fixed by God himſelf, to continue unchanged till the appearance of the *Meſſiah*.

The predictions of *Iſaiah*, xi. 1, 3, 6, &c. are ſtill clearer, "Unto us a child is born; unto "us a ſon is given; and the government ſhall "be upon his ſhoulders. His name ſhall be call-"ed Wonderful, Counſellor, the mighty God, "the everlaſting Father, the Prince of peace." [Which titles are ſomewhat different in the *Septuagint* tranſlation, but ſuch as are applicable to none but *Chriſt* only.] "Of the increaſe of "his government and peace there ſhall be no "end, upon the throne of *David*, and his king-"dom, to order and eſtabliſh it with judgment, "and juſtice from henceforth even for ever." And in the xliii. chap. Behold my ſervant—

mine

" mine elect, in whom my ſoul delighteth. I " have put my ſpirit upon him—he ſhall ſet " judgment in the earth; and the iſles ſhall wait " for his law."

Nor are thoſe of *Jeremiah* leſs plainly applicable to *Chriſt*, and to him only. Chap. xxiii. and xxxiii. " I will raiſe unto *David* a righte- " ous Branch, and a King ſhall reign and proſ- " per, and ſhall execute judgment and juſtice " in the earth. And this is his name, whereby " he ſhall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTE- " OUSNESS."

And in *Ezekiel* xxxiv, &c. " I will ſet up one " ſhepherd over them" (a ſhepherd of a people always ſignifies a prince or ruler) " and he ſhall " feed them, even my ſervant *David*;" plainly not *David* the ſon of *Jeſſe*; he having been dead long before *Ezekiel's* time. " And I will make with them a covenant of peace, &c. One King " ſhall be king over them all; neither ſhall " they defile themſelves any more with their " idols".

It is predicted by *Haggai*, that " the deſire of " all nations ſhould come;" the *Shiloh*, tranſlated by the LXX. the " accompliſhment of promiſes." How much the coming of the *Meſſiah* was the deſire of all nations is ſhewn above, and how properly *Chriſt* may be called the accompliſhment of promiſes is known to all, who know his religion.

Not

Not leſs expreſs, than magnificent, is the prediction of *Daniel*, chap. vii. "I ſaw in the night "viſions, and behold one, like the SON OF MAN, "came with the clouds of heaven, and came to "the antient of days, and they brought him "near before him. And there was given him "dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all "people, nations, and languages ſhould ſerve "him. His dominion is an everlaſting domi-"nion; and his kingdom that which ſhall not "be deſtroyed." Of the title, "Son of man," which is found twice or thrice in the Old Teſtament, it may be curſorily remarked, that our Saviour ſeems to have been particularly pleaſed with it; as that name is given him in the antient Scriptures; as it expreſſes his ſacred office of the deliverer of mankind, and ſuits the glorious humiliation he voluntarily condeſcended to, in aſſuming the human nature, and paſſing a life on earth for the important purpoſe of reſtoring a ruined world.

In the prophecies of *Iſaiah*, *Ezekiel*, and *Malachi*, he is ſpoken of as he that was to be the "light of the *Gentiles*, their deſire, their ruler;" and that through him the "name of God "ſhould be great among the Heathen." Nor is there any one to whom theſe characters can be applied, but *Chriſt* only.

The important circumſtance of his giving his life for the world is clearly held forth by the prophets *Daniel* and *Iſaiah*, the former of which

ſpeaks

ſpeaks of him as to appear "ſeven weeks," that is forty-nine years, taking, according to prophetic ſtyle, a day for a year) "from the going "forth of the commandment to reſtore and "build *Jeruſalem*," and that he ſhould be "cut "off; but not for himſelf." And the latter ſays of him; "Surely he hath born our griefs—he "was wounded for our tranſgreſſions; he was "bruiſed for our iniquities. He is brought as a "lamb to the ſlaughter; and as a ſheep before "her ſhearers is dumb, ſo he openeth not his "mouth. For the tranſgreſſions of my people "was he ſtricken. And he made his grave with "the wicked, and with the rich in his death." Which words are ſuſpected to be tranſpoſed, and that his death ought to have been put with the wicked, and his grave with the rich; as he was crucified between two thieves, and buried by *Joſeph* of *Arimathæa*, who was rich. "He was "numbered with the tranſgreſſors, and bare the "ſin of many, and made interceſſion for ſin-"ners."

It is foretold by *Iſaiah* chap. xxxv. that the *Meſſiah* ſhould perform many great and beneficial miracles; that "the eyes of the blind "ſhould be opened; and the ears of the deaf "unſtopped; that the lame man ſhould leap as "an hart, and the tongue of the dumb ſing." Many minute circumſtances are foretold of him, ſuch as his being of the tribe of *Judah* and ſeed of *David*; that he ſhould be born at *Bethlehem*

(*Mic.*

(*Mic.* v. 2) that he ſhould ride in humble triumph into the city of *Jeruſalem*, (*Zach.* ix. 9. that he ſhould be ſold for thirty pieces of ſilver, (*ibid.* xi. 12.) that he ſhould be ſcourged, buffetted, and ſpit upon, (*Iſa.* l. 6.) that his hands and feet ſhould be pierced, (*Pſal.* xxiv. 16.) that he ſhould be numbered among malefactors, (*Iſa.* liii. 12.) that he ſhould have gall and vinegar offered him to drink, (*Pſal.* lxix. 21.) that they who ſaw him crucified, ſhould mock at his truſting in God, (*Pſal.* xxii. 8.) that the ſoldiers ſhould caſt lots for his garments, (*ibid.* 18.) that he ſhould be buried by a rich man, (*Iſa.* liii. 9.) and that he ſhould not ſee corruption, (*Pſal.* xvi. 10.) The completion of all which predictions in *Chriſt* is viſible in his hiſtory in the New Teſtament.

To what character beſides that of *Chriſt*, are all theſe predictions applicable? And are they not all ſtrictly applicable to *Chriſt*, and clearly fulfilled in him? Should now a ſett of ſatirical, or enigmatical writings be propoſed to be explained; who would heſitate whether the true ſenſe, and proper application of them was diſcovered, when a ſenſe was found, which tallied exactly in every particular? who would imagine thoſe writings to have been compoſed by chance, which ſhewed ſo much regularity and connexion, and which ſuited ſo well the propoſed explication of them?

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The predictions which *Chriſt* himſelf delivered concerning events that were to happen after his time, were confirmations no leſs authentic of the Divine authority of his doctrine, than the completion in him, of the prophecies given of old. Beſides thoſe he gave of his own death, with the particular circumſtances of it; of the behaviour of his diſciples on that occaſion; of the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt, and the miraculous powers to be communicated to his diſciples; beſides theſe, he gave ſome, which cannot be pretended to have been forged after the events, as has been alledged of ſome of the Scripture prophecies. His predictions of the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and diſperſion, for a very long period, of the *Jews* into all nations, but ſo as they ſhould be preſerved diſtinct from all other people in order to their reſtoration; of the general prevalency of his religion over the world, and its continuance to all ages; and of the miſchiefs, conſequent upon the perverſion of it; theſe are events, which at that time were to the higheſt degree improbable. It was altogether needleſs for him to riſque his credit upon the completion of theſe predictions; nor is it to be ſuppoſed, a perſon of his wiſdom would have needleſsly hazarded the confutation of his whole ſcheme in ſuch a manner, if he had not been certain that what he foretold would be fully accompliſhed, and that though heaven and earth were to paſs away,

away, his word ſhould ſtand, as the event hitherto has ſufficiently ſhewn.

That a power of ſo extraordinary a kind, and which ſhould produce ſuch important effects, eſpecially upon the religious ſtate of the world, as Popery has done, ſhould be predicted in Scripture, was reaſonably to be expected. Accordingly by *Daniel*, who flouriſhed near three thouſand years ago, it is foretold, chap. vii. 19. that there ſhould be a tyrannical power, which ſhould "wear out the ſaints of the Moſt High," and that they ſhould "be given into his hands un-"til a time, and times, and the dividing of times." that is a year, and two years, and half a year, which give one thouſand two hundred and ſixty days, which in prophetic ſtyle ſignifies ſo many years. This period is alſo mentioned in five different predictions in the New Teſtament. This power is ſpoken of, verſe 23. as a kingdom "different from all before it." And ſo indeed it is; being a *religious* tyranny, or a ſecular kingdom founded on a pretence of religion. It is repreſented as a monſter with "teeth of iron," and "claws of braſs;" and very properly; for it is the character of that mercileſs religion to deſtroy all who oppoſe it, and to endeavour (by driving thoſe who are ſo unhappy as to fall under its tyranny to make ſhipwreck of conſcience) to damn all whom it deſtroys. It is ſpoken of as "devouring, ſtamping in pieces," and laying waſte the whole world, as "changing times

"and

" and laws," and " ſpeaking great words againſt " the Moſt High." All which ſuit the blood-thirſty cruelty, the unequalled arrogance, and blaſphemous impiety of the biſhops and church of *Rome* to the greateſt exactneſs. It is there ſaid, that he ſhould not " regard the deſire of " women;" which plainly points out the prohibition of marriage; that he ſhould " honour " gods-protectors," that is, tutelar ſaints, and " a god, whom his fathers knew not," a wafer-god, of which god ſome thouſands are made in one day by the prieſts, and eaten, and digeſted by the people. See alſo 1 *Tim.* iv.

In the Apocalypſe, chap. xi, xii, &c. it is copiouſly deſcribed, where it is repreſented under the appearance of a monſter, or " wild beaſt," whoſe " ſeven heads" ſignify, as afterwards explained, the ſeven hills upon which *Rome* was built, and " ten horns" the ten kingdoms, into which the *Roman* empire was divided, whoſe " blaſphemous names" are notorious, as of God's vice-gerent, Our lord god the pope, Vice-god, and the like, who " wars with the " ſaints, and overcomes them," who receives " power over the nations," and is " worſhipped" by them. The ſame is alſo afterwards repreſented under the character of the " great " harlot," or idolatreſs, with whom the " kings " of the earth have committed fornication," that is the idolatry of worſhipping the images of ſaints, and kneeling to the hoſt. She is afterwards re-

preſented as "drunk with the blood" of the martyrs of *Jeſus*. The kings of the earth are afterwards mentioned as "giving their power to "the monſter," as it is notorious that moſt of the kings in *Europe* acknowledged the pope for their lord god, and held their crowns of him, as ſome of them do ſtill. The ſame power is likewiſe held forth under the figure of a great city, the ſeat of wealth, luxury, pleaſure, riches, and commerce, one article of which commerce, peculiar to *Rome* papal, is her trade in the "ſouls "of men."

And by the apoſtle *Paul* this fatal deluſion is called *The man of ſin*, or the very abſtract and quinteſſence of iniquity, a character fit only for the popiſh religion, as it alone of all religions contains an aſſemblage of all that is moſt exquiſitely wicked, beyond what could have been thought within the reach of human invention unaſſiſted by dæmons. Of which the infernal court of inquiſition is a pregnant proof; where cruelty, the diſpoſition the moſt oppoſite to all good, is carried to that diabolical exceſs, that few hearts are hard enough to bear the mere deſcription of it in a book. The propriety of giving the appellation of *The man of ſin*, to the Romiſh impoſture, appears from conſidering, that it has had the peculiar curſed art not only to turn the mildeſt of all religions into a ſcene of the moſt horrible barbarity; but to make the moſt pure and heavenly ſyſtem of doctrines and laws, which ever

were, or will be, given to men, an authority for eſtabliſhing for points of faith the moſt hideous abſurdities, and contradictions to common ſenſe; and for licenſing every abominable wickedneſs that has ever been thought of or practiſed. Inſomuch, that the fixed rates of abſolution, for the moſt horrid and unnatural vices, ſtand appointed by their popes, and publiſhed in different editions. By which means, the great deſign of Chriſtianity, which was *to teach men, to deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly*, is defeated among the deluded proſelytes to that infamous religion. For inſtead of this, popery teaches, that any man, who pays handſomely, may have an indulgence for any number of years to live in all manner of abominable impiety, profaneneſs, and impurity. Is not this *The man of ſin?*

Whoever would ſee how exactly the Scripture predictions are ſuited to repreſent this diabolical deluſion, has only to read the hiſtories of popery, and accounts of the inquiſition. There he will find what hideous ravage has been made by it in different countries. Witneſs their infamous croiſades; the maſſacres of the *Waldenſes* and *Albigenſes*, of whom almoſt a million were reckoned to be ſlain. In thirty years from the founding of the order of the *Jeſuits*, above eight hundred thouſand proteſtants were put to death by the hand of the executioner only. The bloody butchering duke of *Alva* uſed to make it his

boaſt of having cut off in a few years thirty thouſand proteſtants in the *Netherlands*. The deſtruction of helpleſs victims ſacrificed to that infernal fury the inquiſition in one period of thirty years, is reckoned at one hundred and fifty thouſand. Is not this dreadful and wide-waſting miſchief, this terror of human nature, this hell on earth, properly repreſented as a monſter, or wild beaſt, with iron teeth to devour and deſtroy, as drunk with blood, and aſpiring to an authority above all that is called god, or is worſhiped, that is, above all other power and government, challenging the privilege of the grand tyrant and deſtroyer?

Theſe are only a few among many inſtances of the unequalled horrors of this fatal deluſion, and of the exactneſs of the Scripture predictions, which can be applied to nothing elſe, that ever was heard of upon earth. And if in the days of the authors of the above predictions, there was nothing known among mankind, which might give the hint of ſuch a power as that of Antichriſt, or popery; and if no account of this power in our times, when it is ſo well known, can in prophetic ſtyle more clearly deſcribe it, than we find it repreſented in the predictions of Scripture, let the oppoſers of prophecy account for this wonderful agreement between the prediction and the completion, as they beſt can.

Theſe are a few, among almoſt innumerable predictions of future events, of which holy

Scripture

Scripture is full. And, as theſe ſhew themſelves clearly to be genuine revelations from God; the others contained in the ſame writings may in reaſon be ſuppoſed to be of the ſame original, tho' the times when they were given, and the exactneſs of their reſpective completions, ſhould be more ſubject to cavil, than theſe here quoted. And the oppoſers of the revelation, in which theſe predictions are contained, are in reaſon obliged to give ſome plauſible account, how they came there, if not by Divine inſpiration.

Let Chriſtianity have been introduced into the world when it would, it is impoſſible to give any rational or ſatisfying account of its prevalence and eſtabliſhment, but its being a Divine inſtitution. For ſuppoſing it forged in any age before or ſince the received date of about ſeventeen hundred years ago, it will be equally impoſſible to conceive how it ſhould come to paſs upon mankind, if it was a fiction. The Chriſtian religion has been eſtabliſhed upon the ruins of the national religion of every country, in which it has been received. It had therefore the united forces of regal power, ſacerdotal craft, and popular ſuperſtition to bear down, before it could get footing in the world. Its character is directly oppoſite to the ſordid views and ſecular intereſts of mankind, and acceptable to none but virtuous and elevated minds, which in all ages and nations have ever been comparatively a very ſmall number of the ſpecies, and not fit, nor diſ-

poſed to ſtruggle with, much leſs likely to get the better of the majority, ſo as to cram a ſett of falſhoods down their throats.

All the falſe ſchemes of religion, which ever prevailed in the world, have come to be eſtabliſhed either by the multitude's being led to embrace them by craft, or driven to it by force. That Chriſtianity was eſtabliſhed by craft, is on all accounts incredible, and particularly from conſidering its character, which is altogether ſeparate from worldly views, or any kind of motives, which might incline men to deceive; and eſpecially from its ſetting up upon the foot of the moſt ſtrict integrity, of commanding all its votaries to avoid even the leaſt appearance of evil, and by no means to think of doing evil for the ſake of any poſſible good conſequence. Such precepts as theſe would by no means have ſuited a ſcheme calculated for deceiving mankind. On the contrary, we always find the great doctrine preached up by impoſtors is, Zeal for the cauſe, rather than for the truth. This appears dreadfully conſpicuous in the bloody catalogue of ſufferers, who have fallen a ſacrifice to the *Mahometan* and popiſh deluſions. The oppoſers of Chriſtianity are obliged, if they will ſhew themſelves reaſoners, to give ſome rational account of the eſtabliſhment of it, upon the ſuppoſition of its being falſe. They are in reaſon obliged to ſhew how a religion requiring the moſt ſtrict purity of heart and ſeverity of manners, the mortifying

mortifying of inordinate luſts and inclinations, the avoiding every appearance of evil, and encountering all manner of difficulties, and even death itſelf, if required, in teſtimony for truth; they ought to ſhew how ſuch a religion could have been eſtabliſhed in the world by ſuch ſeemingly unpromiſing and inadequate means, as thoſe by which Chriſtianity actually was propagated; and that all this might, in a way accountable by human reaſon, and ſuitable to the uſual courſe of things, have come about in ſpite of univerſal oppoſition from all thoſe in whoſe hands the ſecular power was then lodged; and in ſpite of that moſt unconquerable of all prejudices, which mankind have for the religion they were brought up in. The oppoſers of Chriſtianity ought to ſhew that there have been inſtances ſimilar to this; and that a few artleſs, illiterate fiſhermen might reaſonably be ſuppoſed equal to a deſign of outwitting all mankind, impoſing a ſett of groſs falſhoods upon them, and confounding their underſtandings with fictitious miracles, which they voluntarily, no one knows why, ſwallowed down without examination; and the conſequence of which was the overturning all the national religions of a great part of the world, in ſpite of the power of princes, the zeal of the prieſts, and the bigotry of the people. If they cannot find ſome rational and probable way of accounting for this ſtrange and unexampled phænomenon, upon the ſuppoſition of Chriſtianity's being a fiction;

if they cannot ſhew, that fraud was uſed (for no one ever alledged force) they muſt yield the point, and acquieſce in the account given in the New Teſtament, to wit, That it made its way in the world by the power of its own irreſiſtible evidence.

The author of our religion muſt either have been, truely and indeed, what he declares himſelf; the Son of God, and Saviour of the world, and his religion a Divine appointment; or he muſt have been an impoſtor, or an enthuſiaſt, or madman, and his religion either a ſecular ſcheme, an involuntary deluſion, or a pious fraud.

That *Jeſus Chriſt* was no impoſtor will plainly appear, if we conſider firſt what a monſtrous pitch of deſperate and abandoned wickedneſs was neceſſary to carry a perſon the lengths he went, if he was not really what he pretended. The whole body of hiſtory cannot produce ſuch another inſtance of daring impiety. For no impoſtor ever arrogated ſuch high honours and characters as he does; which to think of as mere fiction and groundleſs pretence, is ſtartling to human nature. To ſuppoſe a man in his ſenſes to go on, conſtantly and invariably for ſeveral years, giving out, that he was the beloved Son of God; that he came down from heaven, whither he was again to return; that he had enjoyed glory with God before the world was; that he had power to forgive ſin; that he was to judge

judge the world; to hear him addreſs the Deity as he does, *John* xviith, appealing to Him for the truth of his pretenſions, and keeping in the ſame ſtrain to the laſt moment of his life; to ſuppoſe any man in his ſenſes capable of all this frightful impiety, is imagining ſomewhat altogether unexampled, eſpecially if we take along with it, that we have from this moſt impious of all impoſtors the beſt ſyſtem of laws that ever was given to the ſons of men, the peculiar excellence of which is their excluding all impiety, fraud, and ſecular views, teaching to avoid even the leaſt appearance of evil, and to give up all for truth and conſcience.

Again, what ſhadow, or ſurmiſe, of indirect dealing, what ſuſpicion of any thing immoral, or unjuſtifiable, appears againſt his character? What fault were his enemies able to lay to his charge, when challenged by him, except that he had expoſed their wickedneſs and hypocriſy? Even when *Judas*, who knew his whole conduct, deſired to betray him, was he able to find any thing againſt him? Had his behaviour been at all ſuſpicious or obnoxious, is there any reaſon to queſtion whether *Judas* had it not in his power to have detected and informed againſt him? And is it to be ſuppoſed, that his inveterate wickedneſs would ſuffer any pretence for accuſing his maſter, and juſtifying his own malice againſt him, to paſs unimproved to the utmoſt?

Beſides, if the author of our religion was an impoſtor,

impoſtor, what was his ſcheme in deceiving mankind? Not any ſecular advantage. For it is notorious, that poverty, contempt, perſecution, and death were his portion, according to his own prediction; that his followers had no better treatment for the firſt three centuries; that the emperor *Conſtantine's* giving ſecular advantages to the Chriſtians was the firſt blow ſtruck to the original diſintereſted purity of that religion; and that from the time the world was thruſt into the church, religion began to decline, which ſhews, that ſecular views were inconſiſtent with its true deſign and genius.

If it was ſet up with a view to worldly grandeur, how comes it every where to inculcate the contempt of riches, honours, and pleaſures, and the purſuit of things ſpiritual and heavenly? What ſteps were taken by *Chriſt*, or his followers, to aggrandize themſelves? Was not, on the contrary, their practice ſuitable to their doctrine? Is not the whole of their character a perfect pattern of ſelf-denial and abſtinence? Who has ever convicted them of any one inſtance of worldly craft or deſign? It is certain from all accounts, ſacred and profane, that at the time of *Chriſt's* appearance in the world, there was a general expectation of the *Meſſiah*; and that the idea formed by the groſs apprehenſions of the people, of the character he was to appear in, was that of a great prince. What could therefore be more natural for an impoſtor, than to take the

advantage

advantage of this prejudice, ſo favourable to a worldly ſcheme? Inſtead of which we find him, (and his apoſtles after they came once to underſtand the ſcheme he was upon) ſetting up on a quite different footing, the moſt unpopular plan, that could have been thought of; diſclaiming all worldly views, and declaring that their profeſſion led directly to poverty and ſuffering. It is indeed evident, that conſidering the univerſal prejudice of the *Jews* with reſpect to the character in which the Saviour of the world was to appear, it muſt have been impoſſible for a perſon of that nation to frame an idea of a ſuffering *Meſſiah*, but by inſpiration, or from underſtanding the antient predictions concerning him in a manner quite different from what was uſual among them.

Farther, what probability is there, that he who had ſagacity enough to contrive a ſcheme, which did in effect prevail againſt all oppoſition, ſhould yet be ſo imprudent, as to hazard the diſappointment of his whole deſign by overloading it with ſo many incumbrances? Why ſhould he pretend to be the Son of God, if it had not been true? How, indeed, could a mere human brain invent ſuch a thought? How work out of itſelf the imaginations of his having enjoyed pre-exiſtent glory with God, of his coming into the world to give his life for the life of the world; and of his being the appointed future Judge of the human race? There is ſomething in this, which lies wholly

wholly out of the way of mere humanity. And accordingly thoſe who heard him, at leaſt the unprejudiced, owned, that "he ſpoke as never "man ſpoke." But farther; Why ſhould he forwarn his followers of the diſcouraging conſequences of their adherence to his religion, if he had been capable of deceiving? Why ſhould he diſappoint the inclinations and prejudices of the people, who wanted a worldly *Meſſiah*, if he himſelf aimed at worldly grandeur? Why ſhould he prevent many from following him, who were diſpoſed to do it, by undeceiving them, and informing them that his kingdom was not of this world? Why ſhould he exert a ſupernatural power to withdraw himſelf from among them, when they were going to raiſe him to regal authority; if ſecular power was what he aſpired after?

And, ſuppoſing Chriſtianity an invention of later date, why ſhould the Saviour of the world be repreſented in the ſuppoſed fictitious hiſtory; as ſuffering a ſhameful death? Would it not have been more likely to take with mankind, for the inventors of the ſcheme to have repreſented the author of the religion they wanted to perſuade mankind to the belief of, as a victorious prince, who had got the better of all oppoſition, than as one who appeared on earth in the moſt lowly ſtation; deſpiſed and abuſed, while he lived, and at laſt put to an infamous death between two thieves.

Let

Let it now be conſidered (if indeed it be worth while to conſider what is ſo groſsly abſurd) what poſſibility there is of *Chriſt's* having been an enthuſiaſt, or phrenetic. In order to judge properly of this, let it be computed, what degree of enthuſiaſm was neceſſary to bring a perſon to perſuade himſelf, that he was the Saviour of the world, the *Meſſiah*, the Anointed of God, the Son of God, who had exiſted before the creation of this world, and was again to aſcend to his former glory with God, after finiſhing the great work, for which he came into the world; what degree of enthuſiaſm or madneſs muſt that man have been worked up to, who could believe all this of himſelf, while he was really no more than another mortal? How miſerable muſt his phrenſy have been? How confounded and broke all his faculties?

Next, let it be attended to, what ſuitableneſs there is between ſuch a degree of diſtraction as this, and the whole character and conduct of the author of our religion. What ſingle inſtance does he give of even common frailty, or of ſuch imprudence as is obſerved at times in the conduct of the wiſeſt men; in the conduct even of inſpired men? While prophets, and apoſtles are in Scripture repreſented as falling into the common weakneſſes of human nature (an argument of the truth of ſacred hiſtory) his behaviour ſtands wholly clear of every inſtance of infirmity or frailty. Where are the ragings and bellowings of

of enthuſiaſm? What ſigns did he give of a diſtempered, or over-heated imagination? Is not his whole conduct a perfect pattern of calmneſs, prudence, and caution? Does he not baffle the malicious and inſnaring queſtions of his crafty enemies by a wiſdom, which puts them all to ſilence? Are not his anſwers ſo guarded as to defeat their ſtudied queſtions? Are the artful, the malicious, and the learned, more than children, or fools before him? Is this the character of an enthuſiaſt? Does madneſs thus weigh its anſwers? Has the brain-ſick viſionary any ſuch guard over himſelf, as to avoid the ſnare that is laid for him? Not only to avoid the ſnare himſelf, but likewiſe to put to confuſion and ſilence his adverſaries?

Let it alſo be conſidered, whether it is poſſible, that ſuch a ſyſtem of doctrines and laws ſhould be the production of an enthuſiaſtic or diſtempered brain. A ſyſtem, which has afforded the wiſeſt of our ſpecies matter for ſtudy, examination, and admiration, ever ſince it has been publiſhed to the world. A ſett of doctrines more ſublime than all that ever were taught mankind before. Diſcoveries, which neither ſacred, nor profane antiquity had before exhibited to mankind. Solutions of the very difficulties, which had put the wiſdom of the antients to a ſtand. Doctrines beyond the natural reach of human reaſon, and yet, when diſcovered, commending themſelves to reaſon, and bearing the internal

internal marks of their Divine original. Precepts, whoſe purity puts the antient legiſlators to ſhame. Laws tending to improve human nature to its utmoſt perfection. A rule of life ſuperior to all others, in its being abſolutely perfect and complete, wanting nothing proper for the regulation of every paſſion and appetite, for directing to the complete performance of every ſocial and relative duty, and fixing the only acceptable way of worſhipping the One Supreme. A ſcheme, of which it is with reaſon ſaid in Scripture, that the angels deſire to look into it. Are theſe the productions of a viſionary; theſe the reveries of a hot-brain'd enthuſiaſt? It is plain, that his enemies neither thought him ſuch, nor thought it poſſible to perſuade the generality of the people, who converſed with him, to think ſo of him. For, if they could have made him paſs for an enthuſiaſtic or phrenetic perſon, they certainly would have choſe that, as the eaſieſt way of ridding themſelves of him, and putting a ſtop to his ſcheme.

If it can be proved, that the religion of *Jeſus* is by no means a fraud of any kind, it will unqueſtionably follow, that it is not a *pious* fraud. But, that Chriſtianity is no fraud of any kind is plain not only from the excellency of its doctrines and precepts, the character of its author, and firſt propagators, and its expreſs prohibition of every appearance of deceit on whatever pretence; but

but from the concurrence and coincidence of innumerable collateral evidences, which by their very nature were not within the reach of human contrivance. The whole body of revelation is to be conſidered as one uniform ſcheme, reaching from the beginning to the end of the world; in which the ſalvation of mankind by the *Meſſiah* is the principal part, or point of view, to which all the others lead, and with which they are connected, in ſuch a manner, that the whole muſt ſtand, or fall together. So that, if the Chriſtian religion be a deluſion, it is evidently too great and extenſive to be a deluſion of human invention. That it is no contrivance of evil ſpirits, is plain from its direct tendency to promote virtue and goodneſs, and to baniſh all kinds of impiety and vice out of the world. It muſt therefore be a ſcheme of ſome being, or beings, ſuperior to humanity. Which is owning it to be a Divine appointment: For we have no conception of a *fraud* contrived by any good being of the angelic rank.

That it ſhould be propheſied at the beginning of the world, and recorded by *Moſes*, a thouſand years before the appearance of *Chriſt*, "that "the ſeed of the woman ſhould bruiſe the "ſerpent's head," and that *Chriſt* ſhould be the ſeed of a woman, miraculouſly conceived without the concurrence of a male; could this have come about by human contrivance? When it is repeatedly foretold by the prophets,

that *Chriſt* ſhould come of the poſterity of *Abraham*, of *Iſaac*, of *Jacob*, of *David*; that he ſhould be born at *Bethlehem*; that he ſhould appear about the time of the "departure of the ſceptre from *Judah*;" that he ſhould be "cut off, but not for himſelf; be "pierced, be put to death with the wicked, and "buried by the rich; that he ſhould be ſold for "thirty pieces of ſilver;" and all the circumſtances of his death particularly pointed out; that all theſe and many other predictions, fulfilled in *Chriſt*, and anſwering to none elſe but him, ſhould be found in the Scriptures preſerved by the *Jews*, the violent oppoſers of *Chriſt* and his religion; let the inventors of Chriſtianity (ſuppoſing it an invention) have been ever ſo cunning, they never could have modelled the whole ſcheme from the very beginning, ſo as it ſhould anſwer their purpoſe; they could never have brought things about in ſuch a manner, as to make them ſuit in ſuch a number of particulars, as will appear by running over the various evidences for our religion.

And it is notorious, that not only the weak and illiterate, but ſome of the wiſe and learned, embraced Chriſtianity at the time, when it might with eaſe and certainty have been diſcovered to be an impoſture, if it really was ſo: That thoſe who at firſt were prejudiced againſt it, were afterwards converted to the belief of it: That numbers of thoſe, who certainly knew, whether *Jeſus Chriſt*

was really riſen from the dead or not, gave up their lives in atteſtation, not of an opinion, but of a ſimple fact, concerning the truth or falſhood of which they could not have the leaſt doubt: That the firſt propagators of Chriſtianity were not to be put to ſilence by all the oppoſition they met with from all the powers of the world: That though they expected nothing but perſecution, impriſonment, ſcourging, and all kinds of abuſe, in every place they went to, without any one earthly comfort, to make up for their ſufferings, without the leaſt ſhadow of any temporal advantage; they went on ſtill indefatigable and unconquerable in publiſhing the reſurrection of *Jeſus*. Is it conceivable, that human nature muſt not have been tired out with going on day after day, and year after year, for a whole lifetime, propagating a known falſhood, by which they were to get nothing but miſery in this world, and damnation hereafter?

Deplorable is the objection ſtarted here by the oppoſers of Chriſtianity; That our Saviour's diſciples did not ſee him riſe. As if it were of any conſequence to the certainty of his being really alive again, that no one ſaw him come out of his tomb. That he was certainly dead, is unqueſtionable; he having been publicly crucified, and ſtabbed in the ſide with a ſpear, as he hung on the croſs. And that he was certainly alive again, was as unqueſtionable to thoſe who converſed with him for ſix weeks together, after his

his paſſion, as if they had been witneſſes of his riſing. And that he did not ſhew himſelf to the people (who deſerved no ſuch favour) but only to choſen witneſſes, is an objection as wretched as the former; the only queſtion being, Whether the witneſſes, who declare that *Chriſt* was alive after his crucifixion, are credible; or not. But to proceed;

That a perſon of the conſpicuous and extraordinary abilities of St. *Paul*, ſhould be drawn into ſuch a courſe of extravagance as to travel thouſands of miles, propagating every where an idle fiction of his having had a viſion of *Chriſt*, and being commiſſioned by him to preach his religion over the world: That a man of his learning and judgment ſhould, publicly, declare to the world his full perſuaſion of the truth of a doctrine decried by almoſt all the worldly-wiſe of thoſe times: That he ſhould own himſelf to have been formerly in the wrong in oppoſing Chriſtianity: That he ſhould take public ſhame to himſelf before all mankind, and commit his recantation to writing, to ſtand on record as long as the world laſted. What a dgree of madneſs, or faſcination, muſt that have been, which would have been equal to all theſe effects? But what ſort of madneſs or faſcination muſt that have been, which could come to ſuch a height, and not have wholly incapacitated the apoſtle for every thing conſiſtent with common ſenſe and diſcretion? Yet we find the works of

this illuſtrious propagator of Chriſtianity, conſidered only in a critical light, are, to ſay the leaſt, equal to thoſe of the greateſt geniuſes, and beſt reaſoners, of antiquity; and himſelf by heathen writers celebrated as a perſon of ſuperior abilities. And that neither our Saviour nor his apoſtles were in their own times taken for enthuſiaſts or phrenetics, is plain from the treamtent they met with: For perſecution was never, that I know of, thought a proper way of proceeding againſt ſuch unhappy perſons, as had loſt the uſe of their reaſon. That either the great apoſtle of the Gentiles, the other propagators of Chriſtianity, or its glorious Author himſelf, were perſons deficient in the uſe of their faculties, will appear too ludicrous to require a grave anſwer, if it be only remembered, that it is the very character of madneſs to ſtart from one reverie to another, and to be incapable of all regularity or ſteddineſs of deſign. For a number of perſons to be poſſeſſed with the ſame ſpecies of madneſs; that they ſhould act in concert, and carry on a complicated and ſtupendous ſcheme for a long courſe of years; that they ſhould do what all the learned and wiſe never could do; that they ſhould out-wit the whole world; or rather, that they ſhould reform and improve the world; to alledge the probability of all this, would be inſulting the common ſenſe of mankind.

Nor has the ſuppoſition, of the apoſtles being wilful impoſtors, any more hold of reaſon or probability,

probability, than that of their being enthuſiaſts or lunatics. For it is evident, as already obſerved, that the religion they have eſtabliſhed in the world, is no ſcheme for impoſing upon mankind, nor at all calculated to deceive. Chriſtianity, as it ſtands in the apoſtolic writings, is manifeſtly a ſcheme for opening the eyes of mankind; not for blinding their underſtandings; for improving, not confounding human reaſon; for removing, not riveting prejudice. And it is given with all that unadorned and artleſs ſimplicity, which diſtinguiſhes truth from impoſture. Nor can the leaſt ſurmiſe or ſuſpicion of any indirect deſign be faſtened upon them. No ſcheme for aggrandizing themſelves. Their ambitious views vaniſhed at the death of their Maſter. And from the time of his aſcenſion, we ſee their whole conduct and behaviour wholly diſengaged from, and ſuperior to, all worldly deſigns. We ſee them diſclaiming riches, honours, and pleaſures, and teaching their followers to aſpire only after *future* glory, honour, and immortality, and to trample nnder their feet the vain amuſements of the *preſent* ſhort and periſhing life. The accounts they have left of their own errors and weakneſſes, ſuit very ill with a ſcheme to impoſe on mankind. The diſpute, which we know aroſe between them, muſt have diſcovered the plot, if there had been one. For it is evident, that they did not ſpare one another, and that they have not at all ſoftened things, in the accounts they

have left on record of the differences which aroſe between them. Their accuſation of their countrymen; and their defying, in the moſt public manner, their moſt inveterate enemies to lay any thing juſtly to their charge; what are the genuine marks of integrity and ſimplicity of intention, if theſe are not?

There is indeed no argument for the truth of Chriſtianity more irreſiſtible than the character and conduct of its firſt propagators, and eſpecially of its glorious Author. No human ſagacity could, from mere invention, have put together a fictitious account of the behaviour of a perſon, in ſo many ſtrange and uncommon particulars, as the evangeliſts have told us of our Saviour, without either ſwelling up the imaginary character into that of the hero of a romance, or drawing it defaced with faults and blemiſhes. That human invention is by no means equal to any ſuch taſk, is evident from the ſucceſs of the attempts which have been made by the greateſt maſters of deſcription to draw perfect characters, eſpecially where any thing ſupernatural was to have a place. And that ſuch a character, as that of our Saviour, ſhould be drawn ſo uniform and conſiſtent, at the ſame time that it is ſo wholly new and peculiar, that in all the hiſtories, and all the epic poems, in the world, there is no pattern, from whence the leaſt hint could be taken, to form it by; that this character, in which the greatneſs is of ſo extraordinary and ſtupend-

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ous a kind, that whatever is great in thoſe of warriors, or heroes, or kings, is deſpiſed and neglected by him, and infinitely beneath him; that ſuch a character ſhould be the invention of a few illiterate men; and that it ſhould by them be exhibited, not by ſtudied encomiums, but by a bare unadorned narration of facts, but ſuch facts as are no where elſe to be equalled; he who can believe that all this could be the effect of mere human invention, without ſuperior interpoſition, muſt be capable of believing any thing. So that I may defy all the oppoſers of revelation to anſwer this queſtion, How we came to have ſuch a character, as that of *Chriſt*, drawn as it is, and drawn by ſuch authors, if it was not taken from a real original, and if that original was not ſomething above human?

I do not think it would be a hard matter to write a volume upon this ſubject, without treading much in the footſteps of thoſe who have writ upon the life of *Chriſt*. But without conſidering at preſent, what has, or has not, been ſaid by others, I ſhall only deſire the reader to peruſe carefully the evangelical hiſtory (with what helps may be neceſſary); attending, as he goes through the account of the words and actions of our Saviour, to the diſpoſition, genius, or ſpirit, which ſhines throughout the whole. Let him conſider the tender compaſſion and love for a race of perverſe, ſelf-deſtroyed creatures, which muſt have prompted this glorious Being to condeſcend thus

low to inſtruct and ſave them from vice and its direful conſequences. At the ſame time, let the wiſdom he ſhewed in doing ſo, be conſidered; ſince nothing conceivable is of greater importance, or more worthy of a Being of the higheſt dignity, than the recovery of a ſpecies, otherwiſe loſt and undone, to virtue and endleſs happineſs. Let the prudence and judgment of this Divine inſtructor be attentively conſidered. How eaſy had it been for him, in whom were hid all the treaſures of wiſdom, to have given forth his inſtructions in ſuch a manner as to have overpowered all human underſtanding? How hard do we ſee it is for men of ſuperior learning to adapt their leſſons to the capacities of the young and ignorant? How irkſome to moſt men the employment of teaching? How few teachers are there, who can avoid ſhewing ſome affectation of their ſuperiority in knowledge? Who could have expected, that ever he, who was the inſtrument of God in making this world, whoſe Divine penetration ſaw by intuition through all the depths of ſcience, which a *Newton* could only collect by laborious enquiry, by accurate calculation, and diſtant analogy; that one, capable of inſtructing the moſt enlightened arch-angel, ſhould condeſcend to initiate in firſt principles, a multitude of ignorant, illiterate mortals. "Bleſſed are the "humble, the meek, the merciful." Here is no affectation of myſtic learning; no pompous oſtentation of profound ſcience, no nice diſtinction

of

of ſpeculative points. And yet, when all is duly conſidered, it was no more derogation from the dignity of a Teacher capable of inſtructing angels, to condeſcend to give to thoſe, who may hereafter come to be companions of angels, the firſt principles of virtue, which is the only true wiſdom, than for a philoſopher to teach his ſon the firſt rudiments of learning. Then how wiſely does he ſuit his inſtructions both to the capacities and diſpoſitions of his hearers! Parable and allegory have ever been thought the moſt entertaining manner of communicating inſtruction. The ſeverity of the precept is loſt in the entertainment of the fable. The ſenſible image reflects a light upon the moral thought; and the abſtract thought gives an importance to the ſenſible repreſentation. By apt ſimilitude therefore, and allegories drawn from the ſurrounding objects, did this great Teacher recommend to his hearers the moſt ſolemn truths and important precepts. The honeſt and teachable mind was thus allured to ſearch after divine knowledge; while the proud and obſtinate ſcorned the trouble of enquiring into the eaſy meaning of the figures uſed by him. Thus did his inſtructions become what all addreſſes to free and reaſoning beings ought, a part of trial and diſcipline. So that they who were well diſpoſed might receive improvement and advantage, and the hard-hearted might hear and not underſtand.

With what graceful eaſe, and yet ſolemn compoſure, does he accommodate himſelf to the converſation of all ſorts of perſons! Among the wiſe and learned, how does he ſhine in communicating clear and important truth, confuting their artificial ſophiſms, and ſilencing their malicious cavils! Among the illiterate, how does he condeſcend to the meanneſs of their underſtandings, and adapt his inſtructions to their apprehenſion, and uſual train of thinking, raiſing his reflexions from the preſent objects, and improving upon the moſt common occaſions! Even women and children are taken notice of by this Wiſeſt of teachers. And with reaſon. For no well diſpoſed human mind is of little conſequence. Whatever it is at preſent, it is in the way to be hereafter great and glorious. The character, in ſhort, which the Saviour of the world aſſumed, ſeems to have been equally ſublime and amiable.

How does his wiſdom, and the dignity of his character, appear in his diſcouraging all idle curioſity, which engages the mind unprofitably, and takes off its attention from the awful buſineſs for which we were ſent into the world; at the ſame time, that he fails not to anſwer any uſeful queſtion that is put to him; and ever turns the attention to ſomething great, and worthy of a Divine inſtructor to dwell upon!

How different his manner of communicating inſtruction, from the dictates of the artful impoſtor or wild enthuſiaſt! Inſtead of threatning with

fire and ſword the oppoſers of Divine truth, he kindly forewarns them of the natural and judicial effects of their impious obſtinacy and malice. Inſtead of thundering out ſpiritual anathemas or excommunications againſt thoſe who would not take his religion on truſt; inſtead of depriving them of the temporal advantages, to which every peaceable ſubject has an unqueſtionable right; inſtead of employing the ſecular arm to decide in matters of conſcience, where civil power has no right to interpoſe; inſtead of ſetting the world in a flame about mere ſpeculative opinions, and doubtful doctrines, this Divine teacher applies himſelf to mankind, as one who underſtood mankind. He addreſſes himſelf to their reaſon. He calls upon them to exert their underſtanding. He does not inſiſt upon their believing him on his own aſſertion, though he might have done ſo, on a much better pretence, than the pureſt church, the moſt numerous council, or the infallible biſhop of *Rome* himſelf. He claims no implicit authority over their faith; but appeals to the works, which they ſaw him perform, and to the prophecies of their own Scriptures, which they ſaw fulfilled in him. The doctrines, he dwells upon, and labours to inculcate, are the great and important points of morality, the duties of love to God, and benevolence to man; the heavenly virtues of ſincerity, ſelf-denial, contempt of a vain world, humility, meekneſs, and the other excellent graces, which make the only true ornament

nament of the human mind, which have a natural tendency to qualify it for the ſociety of all well-diſpoſed beings in the univerſe. Is not this the very doctrine, are not theſe the very precepts, which one would expect the meſſenger of God to mankind to teach and inculcate? The perverſe, or vicious oppoſer of religion may cavil as long as he will; but I think myſelf ſafe in venturing the cauſe I defend upon the ſenſe of every well-diſpoſed mind; to which I dare appeal, Whether it does not *feel* the Divine authority of this heavenly Teacher, in the excellence of his doctrines and precepts? But to proceed;

How patiently does he bear with the mean and groveling ideas his diſciples had at firſt of the character in which the *Meſſiah* ought to appear! How kindly does he overlook their weakneſs, in fixing all their deſires on worldly grandeur! What pity does he ſhew for the unhappy uninſtructed part of the people, the publicans and ſinners! How does he ſhew himſelf ready to pardon, though by no means to juſtify, the offences, which proceed from the unthinking indulgence of paſſion and appetite, while he denounces woes upon the hardened and hypocritical ſinner! Wonderful! that he, who himſelf knew no fault, ſhould thus bear with the faults of wretched mortals; while they, though all guilty before God, find it ſo hard to bear with one another.

With

With what open generoſity does he beſtow the higheſt encomium that can be deſerved by mortal man, on one who had juſt before treated him and his pretenſions in a very ſlighting manner. I mean *Nathanael*, who, upon *Philip's* informing him, that the miracles performed by *Jeſus* of *Nazareth*, gave ground to conclude, that he was the *Chriſt*, of whoſe appearance there was then a general expectation. "What," ſays that weak and narrow-minded man, "do you expect the "*Meſſiah* to come from ſo contemptible a place "as *Nazareth?*" Yet when, at the deſire of *Philip*, he is prevailed upon to go and ſee him; as ſoon as he appears, with what unreſerved openneſs does He, who knew all that was in man, overlook his prejudice, and celebrate him as a pattern of truth and ſincerity of heart! How different from this is the conduct of peeviſh mortals! Does one hear the leaſt ſurmiſe of a reflection ſuppoſed to have been caſt upon him by another? How hard does he find it to forgive the mortal injury; how few can ever bring themſelves heartily to love thoſe who have taken the ſmalleſt liberty of this kind!

Excepting two of *Chriſt's* miracles, one of which it is needleſs to mention at preſent, its effect being of no material conſequence at all, but as an emblem of the future deſtruction of the *Jews*, and the other was a juſt puniſhment on the ſufferers; the direct tendency of all of them was kind and beneficial, and ſuitable to the character

character of the Saviour of the world, who came to deliver mankind from vice and miſery. What bleſſings might not be expected from one, whoſe appearance in the world was ſignalized not by vain triumphs, and honorary gifts; but who expreſſed his goodneſs to mankind in giving food to the hungry, ſight to the blind, health to the diſeaſed, the uſe of reaſon to the diſtracted and poſſeſſed, pardon to the wounded conſcience, heavenly knowledge to the unenlightened mind, and the proſpect of endleſs happineſs to the anxious and doubtful?

When his perverſe enemies, with a degree of impiety never equalled before or ſince, accuſed the beſt of characters of the worſt of crimes; alledging that he, who came to deſtroy the kingdom of *Satan*, was guilty of a colluſion with *Satan*; thus effectually defeating the higheſt and moſt powerful means of conviction and reformation, that could be offered to free and rational agents; how does he receive their impious accuſation? Not with a deadly ſtroke from that hand, which could wield all the thunder of heaven; but with a calm remonſtrance on the abſurdity of their accuſation, the greatneſs of their crime, and the fearful vengeance they were drawing upon themſelves.

What ſuperior ſagacity does he ſhew in defeating the artful and enſnaring queſtions put to him by the crafty and the learned! How does he anſwer not only to mens words; but to their thoughts,

thoughts, and deſigns! Let the converſation between him and *Nicodemus* be an example among many. Of which the following ſhort account will ſerve to illuſtrate this obſervation, which is highly neceſſary to be attended to, in order to enter into the beauty and propriety of many of our Saviour's diſcourſes and anſwers.

This teacher and ruler of the *Jews* having ſecretly ſome opinion of our Saviour as a prophet, and deſiring to have ſome particular converſation with him, goes to him in the night, to avoid giving umbrage to his fellow-doctors; being unwilling to be ſuſpected of any inclination to diſſent from the eſtabliſhed and faſhionable opinions. He begins with acknowledging the reality and the greatneſs of the miraculous works performed by him. To which compliment our Saviour returns an anſwer, which ſeems very abrupt; but is exactly ſuited to the character and deſign of *Nicodemus*. The ſenſe of it is as follows.

" I underſtand what you mean by coming to " me thus privately. But that you may at once " be able to judge of the doctrine, which I teach, " to ſee how unſuitable it is to all manner of " worldly views, and may not be deceived into " an opinion of your being of a character and " temper fit to be a diſciple of mine; I tell you " at once, That, as the bulk of mankind are, " it is neceſſary for one who would enter upon " the profeſſion of the pure and ſpiritual reli-

" gion,

" gion, which I am come into the world to teach
" mankind, to be as much changed in his diſ-
" poſition and practice, as if he was to be new-
" born."

Nicodemus, not expecting our Saviour to anſwer to his thoughts, puts a very abſurd conſtruction upon his words. Our Saviour condeſcends to explain the metaphor he had uſed, and to inform *Nicodemus*, that he meant it in a ſpiritual and emblematical, not a literal ſenſe. He then goes on to the following purpoſe:

" If you mean to enter upon the ſpiritual
" religion, which I teach, you muſt not be ſur-
" priſed, that I lay the foundation of my doc-
" trine, not in a ſett of new ceremonies and
" outward obſervances, but in a total change
" of heart and life. For you muſt reſolve upon
" giving up your preſent ſecular ſchemes, and
" becoming indifferent to all worldly purſuits,
" when they come in competition with real
" internal goodneſs."

He afterwards gives *Nicodemus* ſome account of his miſſion, and deſign in coming into the world; and concludes with condemning the obſtinacy and carnality of the people, and of *Nicodemus* himſelf among the reſt, and ſhews, that his and their prejudices in favour of their errors, and attachment to their vices, were the cauſe of their oppoſition to his pure and ſpiritual doctrine. *Nicodemus* being only a *little more* inquiſitive, and having a *little more* candor in his diſpoſition,

diſpoſition, than the reſt of the *Jewiſh* doctors; but not enough to carry him through all difficulties and trials, is treated thus plainly and roughly by him, who exactly knew what was in every man, and not finding the religion of *Jeſus* to his mind, leaves him, and returns to his former profeſſion, without having any good effect wrought upon him by the converſation, that we know of, except, that he ſeems, by one inſtance in the ſequel of the hiſtory, to be more inclinable to favour him than the reſt of his fraternity. A character, this of *Nicodemus*, fatally common among Chriſtians. To be in the way toward the kingdom of God, and yet, through a defect of ſome one neceſſary virtue, or a fatal attachment to ſome one favourite vice, to come ſhort of it at laſt.

To return, How ready is he to find an excuſe for the unpardonable ſtupidity of his diſciples, in ſuffering themſelves, the laſt time they were to enjoy his company before his death, to be overcome with ſleep, while they ſaw the anguiſh their Maſter was in, which, in a Being of his power and intrepidity, might juſtly have alarmed them with the expectation of ſomewhat to the higheſt degree terrible and ſhocking! And good reaſon there is to conclude, that the approach of death was not all that produced in him thoſe dreadful emotions of horror and amazement. Does he not ſuffer the traitor himſelf to follow him for ſeveral years, to partake of his counſels,

to hear his Divine doctrine? Does he not forewarn him of the wickedneſs he had in his heart, and give him all advantage for relenting? Even when he advances to betray his Lord with a treacherous embrace, does he ſtrike him dead with a word? Though they all make their eſcape, and leave him in his extremity, does he puniſh, or even reproach them, after his reſurrection, for their unfaithfulneſs to him, for whom they ought to have laid down their lives, who came to lay down his life for them?

Let the noble and heroic behaviour of the prince of peace, toward his wicked and implacable enemies, be conſidered. How does he ſhew himſelf above their utmoſt malice? Does he not go on ſtill in his calm dignity, and equal goodneſs, in ſpite of their utmoſt fury, till he has finiſhed his miniſtry, and the time comes for him to return to the ſtate of happineſs and glory he had left. When their hour and the power of darkneſs prevails, with what meekneſs does he give himſelf up into their cruel hands? When they come to apprehend him, and, ſtruck with the majeſty which ſurrounded him, fly back and fall before him to the ground, he exerts no vindictive power againſt them, though he could with a word have ſtruck them ſo as they ſhould have riſen no more, and could have called legions of angels, who would have thought it their honour to have been commanded to interpoſe for his deliverance. But though he wrought a

miracle

miracle to avoid regal power, he works none to eſcape an infamous death.

Behold the innocent arraigned before the guilty. The moſt amiable of characters treated worſe than the moſt odious deſerves at any human hands. The future Judge of mankind brought before a human tribunal. He who did no ſin, and in whoſe mouth was found no guile, ſentenced to die, and a robber and murderer pardoned. They, for whom the Saviour of the world came from heaven to give his precious life, long to imbrue their hands in the very blood, which was to be ſhed for them. O the diabolical fury of hypocriſy detected! Crucify him; crucify him; cry the bloody prieſts, and the blinded people echo back the madning voice. But will the Lord of life ſuffer himſelf to be ſpoiled of life by a ſett of miſerable worms, whom he can cruſh to nothing in a moment? No. He lays it down of himſelf; no man takes, or can take it from him. He came to lay down his life for the life of the world. And if daring mortals will be ſo impious as to ſtretch forth unhallowed hands againſt him, the decree of heaven will nevertheleſs be fullfilled, and they, who will heap damnation upon themſelves, ſhall be left to the deſtruction they have ſought. Yet hold your butchering hands, unthinking wretches. Or if his ſacred blood muſt ſtream to waſh a ſinful world from guilt; let the high prieſt with reverence offer him on the altar, the true, the

laſt, the only effectual ſacrifice for ſin. So ſhall you, and your nation, eſcape the deſtruction which hangs over you.—They harden their rocky hearts againſt all ſenſe of pity. They urge their own deſtruction. Let not then the eye of day behold ſo black a deed. Let heaven hide its face from ſuch a ſight. They pierce thoſe hands whoſe ſalutary touch gave health and ſtrength, and thoſe feet which went about doing good. They ſtretch him on the croſs. They ſtop their ears againſt the groans of ſuffering innocence. But the inanimate earth feels, and ſhakes with horror at the impiety of her inhabitants. The rocks burſt in pieces, and nature is in agonies. The ſleep of death is broken by the convulſion. The graves open their throats, and caſt up the ghaſtly dead. An unſeen hand rends the veil of the temple, and expoſes the holy place, into which it was forbidden to enter. His agonies now grow ſtronger. His pangs redouble. The choirs of angels mourn the ſufferings of their Prince. Hell is moved, and the dæmons enjoy a ſhort triumph. Darkneſs covers the face of nature, and chaos ſeems ready to ſwallow all. He calls on his God and Father, the witneſs of his innocence, and approver of his obedience. He prays for thoſe by whoſe murdering hands he dies. He raiſes his voice aloud. His ſtrength is yet entire. But having finiſhed the work, and the prophecies being accompliſhed, by his own original power over his own life, he reſigns his

ſoul

ſoul into the hands of the ſupreme Father of all, and, bowing his head, expires. He dies; and yet his murderers live. His death raiſes a guilty world to life. Tremendous myſtery! Not to be explained, till the veil of time be rent aſunder, and eternity expoſe to view the amazing ſcene of Divine government, too vaſt for mortal comprehenſion. Glory to God in the higheſt! On earth peace, and good-will toward men!

CONCLUSION.

AT laſt I have, in great weakneſs, brought this long labour to a period. On reviewing the whole, I find it very neceſſary to beg the candid reader's indulgence in favour of many deficiencies; though I hope he has not found in the work, any one ſentiment, by which he may have run the hazard of his being deceived or miſled to his hurt. Whoever duly conſiders the diſadvantage, a writer labours under, who lives a life of conſtant care and labour, without ever knowing what it is to have a vacant mind, and whoſe hours of ſtudy are only thoſe few, which remain after eight or ten of almoſt every day in the week indiſpenſably engaged in the laborious employment of teaching, and the other cares attending the charge of youth; whoever conſiders this, and is, at the ſame time, at all a judge of the difficulty of compoſition; will, it is hoped, be inclinable to make allowances for any deficiencies, which may be at all pardonable. It may indeed be anſwered to this, That a perſon, whoſe way of life (excluſive of other diſadvantages) neceſſarily deprives him of that leiſure and vacancy of mind, which are of ſuch conſequence to a writer, had better quit that province to thoſe, whoſe ſtations allow them more leiſure and freedom from care. Perhaps this aſſertion

may be in ſome meaſure juſt. And yet the gentlemen, who undertake the education of youth, do not in general ſcruple to beſtow ſome time in labouring for the public. The pious and learned Dr. *Doddridge*, lately deceaſed, is a remarkable inſtance; who ſo huſbanded the hours he chiefly borrowed from the refreſhments of nature, as to be able to publiſh ſix or eight times the bulk of this book. For my own part, had my circumſtances in life been equal to the expence of printing this work, which never had been undertaken, if it had not been with a direct view to the advantage of the youth educated by me, who, I hope, will find it uſeful as an introduction to life, to ſtudy, and to moral and religious knowledge; had my circumſtances, I ſay, been equal to the expence of printing this book, and giving it them *gratis*; I ſhould not have troubled the public with it; nor do I intend ever more to undertake any work of ſuch a ſize.

And now, before I lay aſide my pen, I beg leave earneſtly to requeſt the reader, and eſpecially, above all others, thoſe for whoſe ſake this work was undertaken, to attend carefully to the few following ſerious remonſtrances. If the reader has peruſed the whole work, without receiving any benefit or improvement from it, he may profit by what *ſtill remains*, by ſeriouſly examining himſelf in the following manner.

" Haſt thou conſidered, O my ſoul, what thou " art, and for what created? Doſt thou habitu-

" ally think of thyſelf as an intelligence capable
" of immortality, and brought into being on
" purpoſe for endleſs and inconceivable hap-
" pineſs? Does the thought of an hereafter
" engage thy ſupreme attention? Is eternity
" for ever in thy view? Doſt thou faithfully
" labour, wiſh, and pray, for the neceſſary abili-
" ties and diſpoſitions for acting up to the
" dignity of thy nature, and the end of thy
" creation? Or doſt thou trifle with what is to
" thee of infinite importance? Thou wouldſt not
" ſurely ſuffer thyſelf to be deceived out of thy
" happineſs? Thou wouldſt not put out the eye
" of thy reaſon, and ruſh headlong upon de-
" ſtruction? Try thy prudence and ſincerity,
" then, by comparing the diligence thou uſeſt,
" and the care thou beſtoweſt, upon the things
" thou knoweſt thyſelf to be ſincerely attached
" to, with what thou think'ſt ſufficient for
" ſecuring an eternity of happineſs. Doſt thou
" riſe early and ſit up late, to get a wretched
" pittance of the periſhing wealth of this world?
" And doſt thou wholly forget, that thou haſt an
" eternity to provide for? Is money thy firſt
" thought in the morning, and thy laſt at night,
" and the ſubject of every hour between? And
" canſt thou find no vacant moment for a
" thought about thy great intereſt? Art thou
" ever ready, and upon the catch, to ſeize the
" empty bubbles of life, as they float along the
" ſtream of time? And doſt thou let ſlip the
" only

" only opportunity for making proviſion for
" futurity; the opportunity, which, if it once
" eſcapes thee, thou knoweſt, a whole eternity
" will never more bring back? Doſt thou ſuſpect
" every perſon, and watch over every circum-
" ſtance, that may any way affect thy worldly
" affairs? And doſt thou take up with any
" ſecurity, or with abſolute uncertainty, to found
" thy proſpect of future happineſs upon? Thou
" doſt not count it prudence to ſay to thyſelf,
" Riches will flow in of themſelves; I ſhall of
" courſe riſe to a ſtation of honour. And doſt
" thou think it wiſe to ſay, God is merciful; he
" will not puniſh my neglect of him, or my re-
" bellion againſt him; though both Scripture
" and reaſon ſhew it to be impoſſible, that vice
" ſhould in the end be happy? Or doſt thou
" pretend to have found out a new way to hap-
" pineſs? Doſt thou propoſe to outwit infinite
" Wiſdom? Thou canſt not ſurely think of
" being happy, without being virtuous? Thou
" canſt not dream of a rational creature's coming
" to happineſs, under the government of a
" Being of infinite purity, while his whole
" nature is depraved and polluted by vice? Does
" any wiſe prince pardon a rebellious ſubject,
" while he continues in a ſtate of rebellion?
" Doſt thou expect that the infinitely wiſe Go-
" vernor of the univerſe ſhould, for love of thee,
" new-model his auguſt oeconomy, reverſe his
" unchangeable laws, and take an enemy to all
" good

" good into his boſom ? Doſt thou even imagine
" it poſſible, that He, whoſe nature is unchange-
" ably good, ſhould ever change ſo, as to be-
" come the friend of vice ? Haſt thou any con-
" ception of the poſſibility of happineſs's being
" the conſequence of vice ? Canſt thou conceive,
" that heaven would be heaven to a being, whoſe
" faculties were overturned, whoſe moral ſenſe
" was perverted; to whoſe mind goodneſs had
" no beauty; to whoſe underſtanding truth and
" virtue were no adequate objects; who could
" receive no joy from the contemplation of
" moral excellence ? who would prefer a ſenſual
" gratification to the beatific viſion of God ?
" And doſt thou found thy hopes of future hap-
" pineſs upon a direct impoſſibility ? Doſt thou
" aſſure thyſelf of obtaining what it is clearly
" impoſſible thou ever ſhouldſt obtain, and what
" if thou doſt not obtain, thou art utterly un-
" done ? But thou ſayeſt, that this is not thy
" dreadful caſe. That thou proceedeſt upon a
" more prudent ſcheme, in a matter, upon which
" thy all depends.

" Doſt thou, then, make it thy ſupreme care
" to perform thy whole duty, without neglecting
" the leaſt article of it, however diſagreeable to
" thy temper, or turn of mind; and to avoid
" every vice, every temptation to every vice,
" every appearance of every vice, however grate-
" ful to thy depraved diſpoſition ? Doſt thou
" conſtantly watch over thyſelf; doſt thou ſuſ-

" pect

" pect every other perſon, leſt his example, or
" influence, miſlead thee? Doſt thou often, and
" regularly, meditate on thy ways, and exa-
" mine thy heart and thy life? Doſt thou per-
" fectly know thy own weakneſs? Haſt thou all
" thy infirmities engraven on thy remembrance?
" Are thy ſins ever before thee? Doſt thou dread
" vice more than poverty, pain, or death? Doſt
" thou carefully reſtrain every paſſion and appe-
" tite within due bounds? Art thou afraid of
" the fatal allurements of riches, honours, and
" pleaſures? Doſt thou indulge them ſparingly?
" Doſt thou enjoy the gratifications of ſenſe
" with fear and trembling? Art thou ever ſuſ-
" picious of thy frail nature, on this dangerous
" ſide? Doſt thou carefully ſteer clear of the
" rocks, on which multitudes have ſtruck, and
" made ſhipwreck of their ſouls? Or doſt thou,
" in inſolent confidence of thy own fancied
" ſtrength of mind, dally with temptation, and
" play upon the brink of vice and deſtruction?
" Doſt thou habitually labour to make ſure of
" keeping within bounds? Doſt thou often
" deny thyſelf, rather than run the ſmalleſt
" hazard of offending? Doſt thou live ſuch a
" life of temperance, that thou couldſt at any
" time enjoy the ſatisfaction of a peaceful mind,
" and a good conſcience, though at once de-
" prived of all the gaieties and amuſements of
" affluence? Or doſt thou give thyſelf up whol-
" ly to eaſe and indolence; to luxury and intem-
" perance;

" perance; to pleaſure and folly? Doſt thou
" take thy ſwing, without reſtraint or meaſure,
" of every lawleſs enjoyment; as if the preſent
" ſtate were never to come to an end; as if thou
" hadſt been created only for pleaſure and idle-
" neſs; as if thou thought'ſt of a future ſtate,
" not of ſpiritual exiſtence; of perpetual im-
" provement in wiſdom and goodneſs; and
" of ſublime employment and action; but of a
" *Mahometan* paradiſe, an endleſs ſcene of luxury
" and ſenſuality? If thou art in good earneſt
" reſolved to conquer thy unruly paſſions, to
" reſtrain thy ſenſual appetites, and to regulate
" the motions of thy mind according to the dic-
" tates of reaſon and conſcience, and the more
" ſure directions of Divine revelation, thou wilt
" ſtudy *thyſelf* more than all the ſciences; thou
" wilt often retire within thyſelf; thou wilt be
" ever finding in thy own mind ſomething to
" regulate and redreſs; thou wilt not fly from
" thyſelf; thou wilt not be continually racking
" thy invention to find out ſomewhat to drown
" thought and reflexion; thou wilt beg of thy
" friends to hold up to thee the mirror of faith-
" ful remonſtrance; thou wilt not court the
" ſlaviſh flatterer to pour through thy ears the
" luſcious poiſon, which ſtupifies the mind, and
" renders it inſenſible of its own faults, and
" blind to its own follies. Thou wilt labour to
" work into the very eſſence of thy ſoul, the
" virtues, which are indiſpenſably neceſſary for
" bringing

" bringing and keeping it under due regulation.
" Conſideration, humility, ſelf-knowledge, ſelf-
" reverence! Theſe will be the great leſſons,
" which it will employ thy life to learn. And
" thou wilt wiſh for the life of a patriarch to
" ſtudy them fully, and to reduce them to
" practice.

" Again, doſt thou, O my ſoul, harbour any
" thought of malice, envy, or revenge againſt
" thy fellow-creature? Doſt thou ſtand ſo little
" in awe of Him who made thy fellow-creature
" and thee, who will at laſt judge both him and
" thee, and to whom alone vengeance belongs;
" doſt thou fear him ſo little, as to think of
" breaking looſe upon his creature in his pre-
" ſence? Haſt thou conſidered, that, if thy
" Maker do not ſhew mercy upon thee, thou
" hadſt better never have been born? And doſt
" thou hope for mercy from infinite Purity, who
" (thyſelf an offender) canſt think of refuſing
" mercy to thy brother? Doſt thou imagine,
" that, in a future ſtate of perfect benevolence,
" there will be any place found for the ſordid
" mind, whoſe affections are ſhrunk and contract-
" ed to the narrow circle of ſelf and family? Doſt
" thou think there will be any happineſs for thee
" in a ſtate of perfect harmony and love, unleſs
" thou work into thy very ſoul the god-like
" virtue of unbounded benevolence? Thou
" canſt not think a diſpoſition to cruelty, to
" deceit, to anger, hatred, or revenge; thou canſt

" not

" not think a mind given to low craft, to narrow
" ill-will, or to ſordid ſelfiſhneſs, can be found
" fit for a ſtate of happineſs founded on univer-
" ſal love and kindneſs. Thou canſt not ima-
" gine that He, whoſe very nature is love, will
" give happineſs to one, whoſe mind is deformed
" with angry and malevolent paſſions. Thou
" canſt not expect, that He will, by giving
" admittance to one ill-diſpoſed mind, render
" the happineſs of innumerable glorified beings
" precarious. Nor canſt thou even conceive the
" poſſibility of a mind's being *capable* of hap-
" pineſs, which has not in itſelf ſo much as the
" foundation, or firſt principle, on which hap-
" pineſs depends; a temper qualified for enjoy-
" ing happineſs. If therefore thou haſt any
" thought of being hereafter a member of
" that univerſal bleſſed ſociety of choſen ſpirits,
" of the excellent ones of the earth, of ſouls
" formed to love, and peace, and harmony;
" thou wilt ſet thyſelf in earneſt to enrich
" thy mind with the heavenly graces of meek-
" neſs, patience, forbearance, and benevolence;
" and in the exerciſe of theſe virtues thou wilt
" find joys inconceivable to the ſordid ſons of
" earth; thou wilt endeavour to be to thy fellow-
" creatures, even in this world, a guardian angel,
" and a god.

" Doſt thou, O my ſoul, conſider thyſelf as
" the creature of Omnipotence, formed to fill a
" place,

" place, and contribute thy ſhare toward carry-
" ing on a ſcheme for the happineſs of multi-
" tudes? Doſt thou think, there is no duty
" owing by thee in conſequence of the honour,
" and the favour, done thee, in calling thee forth
" from thy original nothing, and giving thee
" an opportunity to act an illuſtrious part, and
" riſe in the creation? Canſt thou think of
" thyſelf as capable of knowing, fearing, loving,
" and adoring the Supreme excellence, and yet
" as no way obliged to any of theſe duties?
" Does not, on the contrary, the very capacity
" infer the neceſſity of performing them? Canſt
" thou go on from day to day, and from year
" to year, without ever raiſing a thought to thy
" Creator? Haſt thou no ambition to ennoble
" thy mind with the contemplation of infinite
" excellence? Haſt thou no deſire to imitate in
" thy low ſphere the All-perfect pattern? Doſt
" thou think ever to go to God, if thou doſt not
" love God? The very Heathen will tell thee,
" ſuch a hope is abſurd! Doſt thou think, thy
" Creator will raiſe thee to the enjoyment of
" himſelf againſt thy own inclination, and in
" ſpite of thy impiety? Should he now tranſ-
" port thee to the third heavens, doſt thou
" imagine thou wouldſt find any enjoyment
" there, with a mind ſunk in ſordid ſenſuality,
" deformed by vicious paſſions, and wholly
" inſenſible of the ſublime enjoyments of a
" ſtate altogether ſpiritual. As ever thou

" wouldſt

" wouldſt come to bliſs hereafter, and avoid
" utter deſtruction, do not deceive thyſelf in a
" matter of infinite conſequence, and where a
" miſtake will be irrecoverable. Thou knoweſt,
" that as the tree falls, ſo it will lie; that as
" death leaves thee, ſo judgment will find thee;
" that there will be no miracle wrought in thy
" favour, to *make* thee fit for future happineſs;
" but that thou wilt of courſe be diſpoſed of
" according to what thou ſhalt be *found* fit for;
" that thy future ſtate will be what thou thyſelf
" haſt made it. That therefore to think of
" paſſing thy life in vice and folly, and to hope
" to be wafted to future happineſs upon the
" wings of a few lazy and ineffectual wiſhes
" and prayers in old age, or on a death-bed, is
" to expect to be rewarded, not according to
" thy works, but to thy preſumptuous hopes.
" Which is inconſiſtent both with reaſon and
" Scripture. It is to think to attain the greateſt
" of all prizes, without any trouble. Yet thou
" knoweſt that even the trifles of this world are
" not attained by wiſhing; but by induſtry.
" It is to imagine, that the infinitely wiſe Go-
" vernor of the world will be put off in a man-
" ner which no earthly ſuperior would regard
" otherwiſe than as the higheſt inſolence. Set
" thyſelf therefore, if thou haſt any thought, in
" good earneſt to diſengage thy attention from
" the viſionary deluſions, and ſordid gratifica-
" tions, of the preſent ſtate; and to fix thy

" affections on the only object that is worthy
" of them, or will prove adequate to them.
" Acquaint thyſelf with his perfections. Solace
" thyſelf with his love. Proſtrate every power
" and every faculty before him, in humble ado-
" ration, and ſelf-annihilation. Truſt to him
" (in well-doing) for the ſupply of every want,
" for the life that now is, and for eternity. Sa-
" crifice every favourite paſſion, and every
" craving appetite, every proſpect in life, with
" family, and friends, and life itſelf, to his obe-
" dience. Never think thou haſt done enough,
" or canſt do too much, to gain his approbation.
" For if thou doſt but ſecure that, it will be of
" no conſequence to thee, if all the princes and
" potentates on earth frown upon thee.

" Haſt thou conſidered, O my ſoul, the ſtu-
" pendous ſcene, which Revelation opens before
" thee? Haſt thou attended to the view there
" given of the dignity of thy nature? It is to
" reſtore thee, and thy unhappy offending fellow-
" creatures, to pardon, to virtue, and to hap-
" pineſs, that Heaven came down to tabernacle
" with men; that the Lord of angels and arch-
" angels humbled himſelf to die by the hands,
" which himſelf, by the power of the Father,
" created. It was to raiſe thee, and ſuch as
" thee, mean and wretched as thou art at pre-
" ſent, to greatneſs and glory, inconceivable not
" only to thyſelf, but to the brighteſt ſeraph in
" heaven; it was for this, that he, whom the

" celeſtial hoſts obey, humbled himſelf to a
" ſtation, and underwent ſufferings, which thou
" wouldſt think thyſelf (guilty as thou art) hardly
" treated in being expoſed to. And canſt thou,
" O my ſoul, allow thyſelf to think of vice as
" ſlight, or venial, which to prevent, and whoſe
" fatal effects to cure, thou knoweſt what an
" apparatus has by infinite wiſdom been thought
" neceſſary? Canſt thou think of any thing as
" deſirable, beſides virtue; which alone will,
" through the Divine mercy, ſecure univerſal
" happineſs? Canſt thou think of any thing as
" terrible, but vice, which, if ſuffered to prevail,
" would unhinge the creation? Wilt thou not
" attend to the only leſſon, thou art placed in
" this ſtate of diſcipline to learn,—Obedience?
" Wilt thou ſhut thine eyes, and ſtop thine ears,
" againſt every object around thee? For every
" object teaches that important leſſon? Wilt
" thou pervert thy own underſtanding, and blind
" thy own conſcience? For the excellence of
" virtue, and the ruinous tendency of vice, are
" written upon every faculty of the mind, in
" characters indelible? Wilt thou, to crown all,
" to ſeal thy own deſtruction, and heap on thy-
" ſelf damnation, wilt thou neglect, or oppoſe,
" the immediate call of Heaven itſelf, warning
" thee to flee from the wrath to come, and to
" work out with fear and trembling thy own
" ſalvation? Thou canſt not think thyſelf ſure
" of happineſs, without taking the leaſt thought
" about

" about it? Thou canſt not imagine it abſolute-
" ly impoſſible that thou ſhouldſt come to de-
" ſtruction: If that were the caſe, to what pur-
" poſe was conſcience placed in the human
" breaſt? To what end were the awful warnings
" of ſickneſs and pain, of judgements from
" heaven on guilty nations, and death, the bitter
" draught to be drunk by every individual of
" the ſpecies; for what end were thoſe warn-
" ings ſent; if future happineſs were the una-
" voidable and appointed fate of all mankind
" promiſcuouſly; the vicious as well as the
" virtuous, the impious as well as the devout?
" As to revelation, it is the awful voice of God
" himſelf. Hear how kind, and yet how ſolemn,
" its remonſtrances.

" Hear, O Heavens; give ear, O Earth! To
" thee, O Man, I call. My voice is to the Sons
" of men. The Judge of all the earth will do
" right. He will by no means clear the (im-
" penitently) wicked. He is a conſuming fire
" to the workers of iniquity. He is of purer
" eyes, than to behold iniquity, or look upon
" evil. The wicked ſhall not ſtand in his ſight.
" All that forget God ſhall be turned into hell.
" The ſoul, that ſins, it ſhall die. Without
" holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord. For eve-
" ry idle word men ſhall be brought into judge-
" ment. If any man bridles not his tongue, that
" man's religion is vain. Let every one, who
" names the name of *Chriſt*, depart from iniquity.

" Let him cleanſe himſelf from all filthineſs of
" fleſh and ſpirit, and perfect holineſs in the fear
" of God. Let him keep himſelf unſpotted
" from the world; for if any man love the
" world, and the things of the world, the love of
" the Father is not in him. Let him avoid
" every appearance of evil. Let him lay aſide
" every weight, and the ſin that does the moſt
" eaſily beſet him, and run the race ſet before
" him. Let him pluck out right eyes, and cut
" off right hands; that is, root out vicious in-
" clinations, though as dear to him, and as hard
" to part with. Let him reſolve faithfully to
" practiſe whatſoever things are true, honeſt,
" pure, lovely, and of good report. Let him
" ſtudy the virtues of humility, meekneſs,
" patience, forbearance, reſignation, fortitude.
" Let him deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſt,
" and reſolve to live ſoberly, righteouſly and
" godly. Let him have reſpect to all the Divine
" commandments; for whoever (habitually)
" offends in *one* point, is guilty againſt the
" *whole* law; as he thereby inſults the authority,
" which framed the whole. If any man will be
" a diſciple of *Chriſt*, let him deny himſelf, and
" take up his croſs (if he be called to it) and fol-
" low him. For he, who does not hate (that is,
" overlook) father and mother, and wife and
" children, and houſes and lands, for his ſake, is
" not worthy of him. And whoever, in the
" worſt of times, denies *Chriſt*, and his religion,

" before

" before men; him will *Chriſt* deny before his
" Father, and his holy angels. For the diſci-
" ples of *Chriſt* muſt not fear them who can only
" kill the body; but after that can do no more.
" He has forewarned them, whom they ſhall fear;
" even Him, who, after he has killed the body,
" can likewiſe deſtroy the ſoul in hell. Let the
" Chriſtian ſtrive to enter in at the ſtrait gate.
" For ſtrait is the gate, and narrow the way,
" which leads to life; and few there be that find
" it; and wide is the gate, and broad the way,
" which leads to deſtruction, and many there
" be, who go in thereat. Let him give dili-
" gence to make his calling and election ſure.
" Let him keep his loins girded, and his lamp
" burning, like thoſe, who wait for the coming
" of their lord. Let him ſtand faſt in the faith
" without wavering. Let him take the whole
" armour of God; ſince he muſt wreſtle not
" only with fleſh and blood; but with princi-
" palities and powers. Let him add to his faith
" virtue, and knowledge, and temperance, and
" patience, and godlineſs, and benevolence. Let
" him be careful, that all thoſe virtues be in
" him; and that they abound, and increaſe.
" Let him reſolve to go on to perfection, for-
" getting paſt attainments, and reaching forward
" to the things which are before, or thoſe de-
" grees of virtue, which he has not yet attained;
" let him endeavour to walk as *Chriſt* walked
" (not form his character according to the exam-

" ple of men of the world); let him be a follower
" of God (not of faſhion); let him endeavour to
" be perfect, even as his heavenly Father is per-
" fect. Let him not be contented with ordi-
" nary degrees of goodneſs; but take care that
" his righteouſneſs exceed that of ſcribes and
" phariſees, and formal profeſſors. And let
" him reſolve, in ſpite of all oppoſition, to per-
" ſevere to the end, fighting the good fight of
" faith, and working out his own ſalvation.
" For the Son of man ſhall come in his glory,
" and all his holy angels with him; and he ſhall
" ſit on the throne of his glory. And before
" him ſhall be gathered all nations. And he
" ſhall ſeparate the good from the wicked.
" And he ſhall ſay to the good on his right hand,
" Come, ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the
" kingdom prepared for you from the founda-
" tion of the world. And on the wicked, on his
" left, he ſhall paſs the dreadful and irreverſible
" ſentence, Depart, ye curſed, into everlaſting
" fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels.
" Here is what ought to the higheſt degree
" to alarm thee, O my ſoul, if thou haſt not
" given thyſelf up to a ſpirit of ſtupidity and
" inſenſibility. Conſider, in time, ere it be too
" late, what thou haſt to do. Here is life and
" death, the bleſſing and the curſe, fairly ſet
" before thee, for thy choice. If thou deceiveſt
" thyſelf, thou alone wilt be the loſer; and thy
" loſs will be irretrievable. For it is the loſs,

" not

" not of fading wealth, or momentary pleaſure;
" but of endleſs happineſs and inconceivable
" glory. It is the loſs of thyſelf. And what
" wilt thou find to make thee up for the loſs
" of thyſelf? Put then the caſe the moſt that
" can be to the advantage of the choice of
" virtue; ſtill thou wilt find virtue to be thy
" true wiſdom, and thy only intereſt; and the
" choice of vice to be the very madneſs of folly.
" Suppoſe, on one hand, thou wert ſure thou
" couldſt, by various wicked arts, attain the full
" enjoyment of every earthly delight; that thou
" wert certain of gaining the empire of the
" world, and of revelling in wealth and wanton-
" neſs, like the leviathan in the deep, for a whole
" century of years: If for this thou wert to ſell
" thy everlaſting happineſs; if for this thou
" wert to expoſe thyſelf to utter deſtruction,
" where would be the gain? Rather, would not
" the loſs be infinite, and the folly of chooſing it
" infinite? Suppoſe, on the other hand, that
" virtue and religion abſolutely required thy
" ſubmitting to poverty, affliction, and perſecu-
" tion for life, and to the fiery trial of martyrdom
" at laſt; to conſider, whether thou ought'ſt in
" prudence to chooſe the light afflictions of the
" preſent ſtate, which are but for a moment,
" and are to be followed with an exceeding and
" eternal weight of glory; or to throw thyſelf
" into the hideous ruin and perdition, which
" awaits the wicked hereafter; to conſider, or

" heſitate,

" heſitate, which of theſe ought to be choſen,
" would it not be a folly infinitely greater than
" his, who ſhould heſitate whether he ought to
" throw himſelf out of a window, when the
" houſe is on fire, or to take to the boat, when
" the ſhip is ſinking? Suppoſe, that the future
" iſſue of virtue and vice reſpectively were in
" ſome meaſure doubtful, inſtead of being
" certain: Suppoſe it were poſſible, that vice
" might, by ſome inconceivable means, come
" to eſcape, and that there were any appearance
" of common ſenſe in imagining that it might ſo
" happen, that virtue might miſs of its reward
" hereafter; who would heſitate a moment,
" whether he ought to chooſe what he knows
" he cannot long enjoy at any rate, and to re-
" ject what, if he attains it, will hold to eter-
" nity; whether he ought to avoid afflictions,
" which he is certain muſt, in a very few years,
" at moſt, be over; or to make ſure of avoiding
" a puniſhment, which, if it comes upon him,
" will be laſting, and ſevere beyond all imagi-
" nation. Upon any principle, the choice of a
" vicious courſe is apparently to the higheſt
" degree fooliſh and deſperate. But taking
" things according to their true ſtate, that is,
" chooſing vice, which is the diſeaſe of the
" mind, the bane of peace and happineſs even
" in this life, and rejecting virtue, which, except
" in the rare and unuſual caſe of perſecution, is
" its own reward, even in the preſent ſtate;

" acting

" acting in direct oppoſition to the conviction of " conſcience, to the remonſtrances of the wiſe " and good of all ages, and to the voice of " nature, and of Divine revelation itſelf!—All " for the ſake of what is vanity and vexation, " when attained, and uncertain before-hand " whether at all attainable; but certainly not " to be enjoyed long, if attained! To give up " a happineſs, certain, laſting, and immenſe,— " not for the actual enjoyment; but for the " bare expectation of a periſhing advantage!— " to ſell one's ſoul—not for the poſſeſſion of a " vanity; but for the uncertain proſpect of a " vanity!—to give up heaven, and brave " damnation—not for a reality; but for a " dream!—for the hope of a dream!—What " words, what tongue of men, or angels, can " expreſs the deſperation of this madneſs! Yet " this is the wiſdom of reaſoning man. This " is the prudence of the children of this " world."

Let the reader make it his conſtant practice in this manner to examine himſelf, with a care proportioned to the importance of the worth of an immortal ſoul. And would to God that the whole human ſpecies could have been brought to the wiſdom of valuing themſelves according to their worth. And that it were poſſible, in a conſiſtency with the freedom of moral agents, that no one individual of the human, or any

other rank of intelligences, ſhould utterly periſh; but that every rational mind, that has been bleſt with exiſtence, might at laſt attain the end of its exiſtence, the beatific enjoyment of its Creator.

THE END.